

OVERBROOK TO PAOLI:
THE HISTORY AND FUTURE OF THE MAIN LINE'S TRAIN STATIONS

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Cornell University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts

by

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August 2011

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ABSTRACT

One of the first railroad lines in the United States, the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad was formed by the government of Pennsylvania in the early 19th century. Eventually, this line stretching west from Philadelphia was purchased by the Pennsylvania Railroad, helping that corporation to become one of the most powerful in the world. A group of small depots were built along the portion of the line closest to the city, eventually leading to the development of a string of commuter suburbs collectively known as the “Main Line.”

Today, 17 of these train stations continue to serve the towns of the Main Line, all of which date back to the Pennsylvania Railroad era or earlier. Of these, several retain their historic station structures that are in continuous daily use by the commuter railroad that still ferries thousands of passengers to Philadelphia each day. These historic depots range in condition from well-maintained to nearly abandoned.

Some communities have taken active roles in restoring their stations, from performing small tasks such as planting flowers on surrounding land to taking the lead in extensive restoration efforts. In Merion and Wynnewood, for example, the nearby communities have taken to performing basic tasks that mainly serve to keep their stations visually attractive. In Wayne, an effort started in the 1990s aimed to do more, including restoring windows, re-constructing canopies and repairing roofing.

Other historic stations are in dire need of help. Devon, whose historic fabric is essentially intact, is badly damaged after years of neglect. Associated railroad buildings located variously along the line, such as signal towers, have been made obsolete by modern technology,

and thus are crumbling away. The Main Line is an affluent area known for its large homes, impressive schools and attractive commercial districts, and yet its railroad infrastructure is treated as an afterthought.

The Main Line's train stations exist in a constant state of flux, as the needs and funding of the current transit operators change. Several depots are slated for imminent changes, while others continue to languish and face uncertain futures. Whether or not the historic and architectural legacy of these stations will continue to thrive and be maintained will largely depend on their users and surrounding communities; the transit agencies alone cannot be expected to provide solutions that are timely, sensitive to local identity, and in keeping with historic character.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Gregory W. Prichard was born near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1984. For the first year of his life, Greg lived with his parents above his father's woodworking shop on Lancaster Avenue in Strafford, Pennsylvania. Greg's family settled in Wayne, Pennsylvania in an 1880s community that was built because of its proximity to the train station at Wayne. Living in this historic neighborhood, Greg became interested in the history of the community, the town, and the Main Line region they are a part of.

Greg received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Industrial Design from Carnegie Mellon University in 2006. This experience followed his many years of drawing and creating artwork. After graduation, Greg worked for over two years at a nationally-recognized Environmental Graphic Design office in Old City, Philadelphia. This work led to a deeper interest in local history, and especially in its interpretation using devices such as signage. Following his time in the design firm, Greg decided to pursue Historic Preservation with a graduate degree, which led him to Cornell.

Having grown up on the Main Line, and having ridden the train from Wayne Station to Philadelphia for work, this thesis can be described as the result of years of Greg's interests and research.

This thesis is dedicated to my family, with thanks for all of their love and support.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis was made possible thanks to the help of several individuals and organizations. Doing research on any railroad topic leads to a complex web of experts and archives, which are often connected. These include the Hagley Museum and Library (with resident PRR archivist Chris Baer), the Lower Merion Historical Society (and its president Jerry Francis), the Radnor Historical Society (and its president Ted Pollard), and the Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society (and its president Roger Thorne). Each of these groups and individuals were of great help to me, as were their extensive and well-organized archives.

Several other individuals were kind enough to speak with me about various aspects of the thesis: Natalia Bobak and Jerry Maier of SEPTA; Carl Doebley of Transystems; Linda Frankel of Amtrak; James Winkler and Scott Maritzer of Converse Winkler Architecture; and Jim Higgins of the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association.

The Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society is a wonderful network of passionate railroad enthusiasts. The society's Philadelphia Chapter includes several individuals who know probably more than anyone about the PRR: Phil Ritter, Al Giannantonio and Ted Xaras are among them. They keep the spirit of the PRR alive, which is essential in understanding the history of Pennsylvania, industry and an entire era of American life.

My professors, Michael Tomlan and Jeffrey Chusid, have kindled my longtime interests in architecture and preservation, and have given me many years of poring over old architectural journals and looking at historic buildings legitimacy and context. I can't say enough how important that is to me.

Finally, I would like to thank my family, without whom I would not have pursued my interests in architecture, history, and even railroads. My mother is an invaluable source of motivation and encouragement, and I sincerely appreciate all she does for me. My brother, Scott, is an inspiration for his dedication and work ethic; he also helped me gain access to the *Railroad Gazette* volumes at the Lehigh University library. And lastly, I would be remiss without acknowledging the continuing influence and inspiration of my father. Although he is no longer here, his spirit and words guided me through this writing. I am pleased to be able to include some of his photographs in this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Biographical Sketch	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v
Table of Contents	vii
List of Figures	x
List of Maps	xviii
List of Tables	xix
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Background History: The Railroad and the Main Line	
The Main Line of Public Works	10
The West Philadelphia Railroad	16
The Pennsylvania Railroad	18
The Main Line	27
Home of the Railroad Gentry	30
Chapter 2: The Stations in Review	
Overbrook Station	36
White Hall Station	43
Wynnewood Station	50

Haverford Station	60
Narberth Station	69
Bryn Mawr Station	77
Ardmore Station	92
Strafford Station	107
Radnor Station	129
Villanova Station	139
Berwyn Station	147
Devon Station	156
Wayne Station	168
Paoli Station	187
St. Davids Station	199
Rosemont Station	210
Daylesford Station	220
Merion Station	225
 Chapter 3: Architecture and Architects	 237
Station Designs	
The Grand Statement	237
The Basic Station, One and Two Story	238
Waiting Room and Attached Cottage	239
Outliers	240

Station Agent Living Quarters	243
Architects	
J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	247
Wilson Brothers & Company	248
Washington Bleddyn Powell	250
Chapter 4: Case Study: The Renovation of Wayne Station	252
The Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association	
SEPTA Renovation, 2007-2010	258
Chapter 5: Case Study: The Potential of Devon Station	276
The Bater Plan	277
The Restall Plan	279
Easttown Township Confronts Amtrak and SEPTA	282
The TranSystems Proposals	285
Potential for Space Rental	291
Conclusion	296
Bibliography	306

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1: 1837 Philadelphia & Columbia timetable	13
Figure 1.2: Ourand sketch of horse-drawn coaches	14
Figure 1.3: Ourand sketch of early P&C locomotive	14
Figure 1.4: Belmont Incline	15
Figure 1.5: Locomotive “Tioga”	15
Figure 1.6: 1835 map of the West Philadelphia Railroad	17
Figure 1.7: GG1 at Wynnewood	25
Figure 1.8: MP54 at Ardmore	25
Figure 1.9: Early Silverliner	26
Figure 1.10: Silverliner brochure	26
Figure 1.11: Cover of <i>Holiday</i> magazine, April, 1950	28
Figure 2.1: Overbrook Station drawing	39
Figure 2.2: Early photograph of Overbrook Station	40
Figure 2.3: Overbrook Station, 2010	40
Figure 2.4: Overbrook Station interior	41
Figure 2.5: Overbrook Station details	41
Figure 2.6: Overbrook Station outbound canopy	42
Figure 2.7: Overbrook switch tower	42
Figure 2.8: White Hall Station painting	46
Figure 2.9: White Hall Station stereo card	46
Figure 2.10: White Hall Station, 1906	47
Figure 2.11: White Hall Station HABS photo	47
Figure 2.12: White Hall Station in 2010	48
Figure 2.13: White Hall Station hardware	48
Figure 2.14: White Hall Station interior, 2010	49
Figure 2.15: Sleepers at White Hall Station, 2010	49
Figure 2.16: 1873 <i>Railroad Gazette</i> featuring Wynnewood Station	53
Figure 2.17: The first station at Wynnewood	54
Figure 2.18: Early view of Wynnewood Station	54
Figure 2.19: Snowstorm at Wynnewood, 1888	55
Figure 2.20: Wynnewood Station, 1905	55
Figure 2.21: Obama campaign stop at Wynnewood Station	56
Figure 2.22: Wynnewood Station from the south, 2010	56
Figure 2.23: Wynnewood Station from the east, 2010	57
Figure 2.24: Wynnewood Station from the north, 2010	57
Figure 2.25: Wynnewood Station from the south, 2010	58
Figure 2.26: Wynnewood Station detail	58
Figure 2.27: Wynnewood outbound shelter, 2010	59
Figure 2.28: Wynnewood outbound shelter interior, 2010	59

Figure 2.29: Haverford College Station, 1870s	62
Figure 2.30: Lithograph of Haverford College Station	62
Figure 2.31: Haverford College Station, late 19th century	63
Figure 2.32: Rau photograph of Haverford College Station	63
Figure 2.33: Haverford Station, 1971	64
Figure 2.34: Outbound canopy of Haverford Station, 1974	64
Figure 2.35: Fire at Haverford Station	65
Figure 2.36: Fire at Haverford Station	65
Figure 2.37: Haverford Station, post-fire	66
Figure 2.38: Haverford Station's underground tunnel, 1980	66
Figure 2.39: Haverford Station from the south, 2010	67
Figure 2.40: Rear of Haverford Station, 2010	67
Figure 2.41: Haverford Station from the west, 2010	68
Figure 2.42: Inbound station at Haverford, 2010	68
Figure 2.43: Elm Station, prior to 1879	72
Figure 2.44: Elm Station	72
Figure 2.45: Engraving of hotel at Elm, 1876	73
Figure 2.46: Narberth Station with two switch towers	73
Figure 2.47: PRR employee at Narberth	74
Figure 2.48: Narberth Station postcard	74
Figure 2.49: Narberth Station prior to demolition, 1960s	75
Figure 2.50: Narberth Station prior to demolition, 1960s	75
Figure 2.51: Narberth's outbound shelter, 1970s	75
Figure 2.52: One Station Square office building at Narberth, 2010	76
Figure 2.53: Penn Central-era sign at Narberth, 2010	76
Figure 2.54: Early view of Bryn Mawr Station	81
Figure 2.55: Engraving of Bryn Mawr Station	81
Figure 2.56: Early photograph of Bryn Mawr Station	82
Figure 2.57: Stereo card of Bryn Mawr Station	83
Figure 2.58: Railroad advertising showing Bryn Mawr Station	83
Figure 2.59: Engraving from pedestrian bridge at Bryn Mawr Station	84
Figure 2.60: Photograph from pedestrian bridge at Bryn Mawr Station	84
Figure 2.61: Third track terminating at Bryn Mawr Station, ca. 1873	85
Figure 2.62: Relocated pedestrian bridge at Bryn Mawr Station, 1890s	85
Figure 2.63: Early electric M.U. train at Bryn Mawr Station, 1915	85
Figure 2.64: Bryn Mawr Station south façade, 1935	86
Figure 2.65: Bryn Mawr Station north façade, 1935	86
Figure 2.66: Passengers boarding train at Bryn Mawr, 1962	87
Figure 2.67: HABS photo of Bryn Mawr Station	87
Figure 2.68: HABS photo of Bryn Mawr Station	88
Figure 2.69: HABS interior photo of Bryn Mawr Station	88
Figure 2.70: Freight station at Bryn Mawr	89
Figure 2.71: Bryn Mawr freight station, now Tango restaurant, 2010	89

Figure 2.72: Bryn Mawr switch tower, 1971	90
Figure 2.73: Bryn Mawr switch tower, 2010	90
Figure 2.74: Outbound canopy of Bryn Mawr, 2010	91
Figure 2.75: Present Bryn Mawr Station from the south, 2010	91
Figure 2.76: Early view of Athensville Station	96
Figure 2.77: Engraving of Ardmore Station	96
Figure 2.78: Ardmore Station plans in the <i>Railroad Gazette</i> , 1877	97
Figure 2.79: Engraving of Ardmore Station, ca. 1877	98
Figure 2.80: Ardmore Station when new in the 1870s	98
Figure 2.81: Ardmore Station, ca. 1890	99
Figure 2.82: Advertising postcard showing Ardmore Station	99
Figure 2.83: Postcard of Ardmore Station	100
Figure 2.84: Postcard of Ardmore Station	100
Figure 2.85: Ardmore Station, ca. 1917	101
Figure 2.86: Inbound shelter at Ardmore Station, 1940s	101
Figure 2.87: Freight station at Ardmore	102
Figure 2.88: Aerial view of Suburban Square and Ardmore Station, 1940	102
Figure 2.89: North façade of Ardmore Station	103
Figure 2.90: North side of Ardmore Station	103
Figure 2.91: Ardmore Station in 1977	104
Figure 2.92: Ardmore Station, looking west, 2010	104
Figure 2.93: Interior of Ardmore Station, 2010	105
Figure 2.94: Ardmore Station, looking east, 2010	105
Figure 2.95: Rendering of proposed new Ardmore Station	106
Figure 2.96: Elevation of proposed new Ardmore Station	106
Figure 2.97: Stereo card of Eagle Station	111
Figure 2.98: Eagle Inn, 2010	111
Figure 2.99: The future Strafford Station in Wayne	112
Figure 2.100: Strafford Station, ca. 1880s-90s, looking northeast	112
Figure 2.101: Strafford Station, 1896, looking southeast	113
Figure 2.102: Postcard of Strafford Station, ca. 1910	113
Figure 2.103: HABS photo of Strafford Station, 1958	114
Figure 2.104: HABS photo of Strafford Station, 1958	114
Figure 2.105: Commuters at Strafford Station, 1956	115
Figure 2.106: Strafford P&W Station	117
Figure 2.107: Strafford P&W and PRR Stations	117
Figure 2.108: Strafford Station after fire, 1999	120
Figure 2.109: Strafford Station amid restoration	120
Figure 2.110: Strafford Station's outbound canopy being restored	121
Figure 2.111: Strafford Station's outbound canopy being restored	121
Figure 2.112: Strafford Station looking west, 2010	122
Figure 2.113: Strafford Station's outbound canopy, 2010	123
Figure 2.114: Strafford Station's outbound canopy, 2010	123

Figure 2.115: Strafford Station detail, 2010	124
Figure 2.116: Interior of Strafford Station, 2010	124
Figure 2.117: Strafford Station detail, 2010	125
Figure 2.118: Strafford Station damage, 2010	125
Figure 2.119: Strafford Station signage, 2010	125
Figure 2.120: Centennial Catalogue Building	127
Figure 2.121: Diagram of Strafford and Wynnewood Station architecture	128
Figure 2.122: Pennsylvania Railroad at Morgan's Corner	132
Figure 2.123: Radnor Station cyanotype photograph	133
Figure 2.124: Hawkins Station	133
Figure 2.125: Postcard of Radnor Station	134
Figure 2.126: Postcard of Radnor Station	134
Figure 2.127: Bridge at King of Prussia Rd. near Radnor Station	135
Figure 2.128: Train wreck at Radnor Station, 1920s	135
Figure 2.129: Train wreck at Radnor Station, 1920s	136
Figure 2.130: Radnor Station looking northeast, 2010	136
Figure 2.131: Radnor Station looking southeast, 2010	137
Figure 2.132: Radnor Station looking southwest, 2010	137
Figure 2.133: Radnor Station details, 2010	138
Figure 2.134: Iron grille detail at Radnor Station, 2010	138
Figure 2.135: Drawing of railroad and Villa Nova College, ca. 1849	141
Figure 2.136: Villanova Station, mid-20th century	141
Figure 2.137: Villanova Station in 1991	142
Figure 2.138: Villanova Station looking north, 2010	142
Figure 2.139: Villanova Station looking northwest, 2010	143
Figure 2.140: Villanova Station basement window grille, 2011	143
Figure 2.141: Villanova Station metalwork, 2010	144
Figure 2.142: Villanova Station details, 2010	144
Figure 2.143: Villanova Station interior, 2011	145
Figure 2.144: Inbound canopy at Villanova Station, 2010	145
Figure 2.145: Proposed section of Villanova Station renovations	146
Figure 2.146: Proposed elevation of new Villanova Station canopy	146
Figure 2.147: Proposed plan for Villanova Station renovations	146
Figure 2.148: Berwyn Station, ca. 1880s	151
Figure 2.149: Berwyn Station, ca. 1888	151
Figure 2.150: A.J. Cassatt brass luggage tag	152
Figure 2.151: Berwyn Station, ca. 1983	152
Figure 2.152: Berwyn Station, ca. 1980s	153
Figure 2.153: Berwyn Station looking northwest, 2010	153
Figure 2.154: Berwyn Station detail, 2010	154
Figure 2.155: Berwyn Station looking west, 2010	154
Figure 2.156: Berwyn Station looking southeast, 2010	155
Figure 2.157: Berwyn Station outbound shelter, 2010	155

Figure 2.158: Engraving of Devon Inn and Devon Station	160
Figure 2.159: Historic photo of Devon Station looking northeast	161
Figure 2.160: Historic photo of Devon Station looking north	161
Figure 2.161: Devon Station postcard	162
Figure 2.162: Devon Station from Devon Blvd. postcard	162
Figure 2.163: Devon Station postcard	163
Figure 2.164: Devon Station, 2004	163
Figure 2.165: Devon Station looking southwest, 2010	164
Figure 2.166: Devon Station, 2010	164
Figure 2.167: Devon Station window details, 2010	165
Figure 2.168: Devon Station roof details, 2010	165
Figure 2.169: Devon Station façade details, 2010	166
Figure 2.170: Fireplace, Devon Station interior, 2010	166
Figure 2.171: Devon Station outbound shelter, 2010	167
Figure 2.172: Devon Station outbound shelter, interior, 2010	167
Figure 2.173: Original Wayne Station, ca. 1870	178
Figure 2.174: Original Wayne Station, 1930	178
Figure 2.175: Engraving of Louella and railroad in Wayne	179
Figure 2.176: Wayne Station Dwelling sheet (unexecuted)	179
Figure 2.177: Wayne Station Dwelling drawing (unexecuted)	180
Figure 2.178: Wayne Station blueprint, 1882	180
Figure 2.179: Wayne Station engraving	181
Figure 2.180: Wayne Station looking northeast, ca. 1880s	181
Figure 2.181: Wayne Station looking west, ca. 1880s	182
Figure 2.182: Wayne Station, ca. 1890s	182
Figure 2.183: Wayne Station postcard	183
Figure 2.184: Wayne Station postcard	183
Figure 2.185: Wayne Station outbound canopy, 1940s	184
Figure 2.186: Wayne Station outbound canopy, 1940s	184
Figure 2.187: Wayne Station, 1969	185
Figure 2.188: Wayne Station, 1969	185
Figure 2.189: Wayne Station, 1970	185
Figure 2.190: Wayne Station, 1983	186
Figure 2.191: Wayne Station, 2002	186
Figure 2.192: Paoli Station, 1890s	192
Figure 2.193: Paoli Station, 1880s-1890s	192
Figure 2.194: 1880s Paoli Station, from tracks	193
Figure 2.195: 1880s Paoli Station, from tracks	193
Figure 2.196: 1880s Paoli Station, rear	194
Figure 2.197: Paoli Station, 1950s	194
Figure 2.198: Paoli rail yard, 1980s	195
Figure 2.199: Paoli Station, 2010	195
Figure 2.200: Inbound platform shelter at Paoli Station, 2010	196

Figure 2.201: Historic canopy at Paoli Station	196
Figure 2.202: Historic canopy at Paoli Station	197
Figure 2.203: Outbuilding at Paoli Station	197
Figure 2.204: Accident at Paoli switch tower	198
Figure 2.205: Former switch tower at Paoli Station, 2010	198
Figure 2.206: Original station at St. Davids, looking southeast	201
Figure 2.207: Original station at St. Davids, looking southwest	201
Figure 2.208: Toll gate at St. Davids, showing station in background	202
Figure 2.208a: Detail of 2.208	202
Figure 2.209: St. Davids Station in the 1890s, looking southwest	203
Figure 2.210: St. Davids Station in the 1890s, looking southeast	203
Figure 2.211: St. Davids Station postcard	204
Figure 2.212: St. Davids Station as new	204
Figure 2.213: St. Davids Station before demolition, 1966	205
Figure 2.214: St. Davids Station before demolition, 1966	205
Figure 2.215: St. Davids Station before demolition, 1966	206
Figure 2.216: St. Davids Station before demolition, 1966	206
Figure 2.217: St. Davids Station before demolition, 1966	207
Figure 2.218: Original brick platform at St. Davids Station	207
Figure 2.219: St. Davids Station, with historic inbound canopy, 2010	208
Figure 2.220: Hairpin fence at St. Davids Station, 2007	208
Figure 2.221: St. Davids Station outbound canopy west end, 2010	209
Figure 2.222: St. Davids Station outbound canopy details, 2010	209
Figure 2.223: Rosemont Station postcard	216
Figure 2.224: Rosemont Station, 1949	216
Figure 2.225: Former Rosemont Station post office, early 20th century	217
Figure 2.226: Rosemont Station looking south, 2010	217
Figure 2.227: Rosemont Station looking southeast, 2010	218
Figure 2.228: Rosemont Station looking northwest, 2010	218
Figure 2.229: Rosemont Station inbound platform, 2010	219
Figure 2.230: Modern outbound shelter at Rosemont Station, 2010	219
Figure 2.231: Daylesford Station from Oak Knoll	223
Figure 2.232: Two women at Daylesford Station, 1914	223
Figure 2.233: Daylesford Station, mid-20th century	224
Figure 2.234: Daylesford Station, 2010	224
Figure 2.235: Original 1864 station at Merion	229
Figure 2.236: Merion Station, ca. 1890s	229
Figure 2.237: Merion Station, ca. 1890s	230
Figure 2.238: Merion Station and surrounding neighborhood	230
Figure 2.239: Merion Station, ca. 1917	231
Figure 2.240: Merion Station, early 20th century	231
Figure 2.241: Merion Station freight depot with slate roof, 2004	232
Figure 2.242: Merion Station roof replacement, 2007	232

Figure 2.243: Merion Station windowboxes, 2010	233
Figure 2.244: Merion Station outbound shelter, 2010	233
Figure 2.245: Merion Station outbound shelter, 2010	234
Figure 2.246: Merion Station post office, 2010	234
Figure 3.1: Homewood Station	241
Figure 3.2: Diagram of general station elevations	242
Figure 3.3: Plans of Ardmore Station	245
Figure 3.4: First floor plan of Wayne Station	246
Figure 3.5: Second floor plan of Wayne Station	246
Figure 3.6: Wilson Brothers & Co. advertisement	249
Figure 3.7: Plan of Wilson Brothers & Co. offices	249
Figure 3.8: Sketches of W. Bleddyn Powell-designed stations for PG&CH Railroad	251
Figure 4.1: Fundraising progress sign at Wayne Station, 2000	257
Figure 4.2: Donor recognition plaque at Wayne Station	257
Figure 4.3: Wayne Station, looking west from new high-level platform, 2009	259
Figure 4.4: New and old outbound canopy overlap at Wayne Station, 2010	259
Figure 4.5: Wayne Station looking east from inbound platform, 2010	260
Figure 4.6: Detail, Wayne Station outbound shelter, 2007	262
Figure 4.7: Wayne Station outbound shelter, 2003	262
Figure 4.8: Re-construction of outbound shelter, Wayne Station, 2009	263
Figure 4.9: New section of outbound shelter, Wayne Station, 2009	263
Figure 4.10: Original restroom door at Wayne Station	264
Figure 4.11: New ADA-compliant restroom door at Wayne Station	264
Figure 4.12: Detail, Wayne Station metal canopy column	265
Figure 4.13: Wayne Station inbound platform prior to renovations	266
Figure 4.14: New canopy columns, Wayne Station inbound platform	266
Figure 4.15: Retaining wall at Wayne Station, prior to construction, 2009	268
Figure 4.16: Filled-in retaining wall at Wayne Station, 2010	268
Figure 4.17: Work on roofing at Wayne Station, 2009	269
Figure 4.18: Workers installing reproduction signage at Wayne Station	270
Figure 4.19: Wayne Station, looking northeast, 2010	273
Figure 4.20: Wayne Station, looking southwest, 2010	274
Figure 4.21: Under the restored outbound shelter at Wayne Station	274
Figure 4.22: Restored underground tunnel at Wayne Station	275
Figure 4.23: James C. Higgins at the Wayne Station ribbon cutting ceremony	275
Figure 5.1: East elevation of Restall proposal for Devon Station	281
Figure 5.2: First floor plan of Restall proposal for Devon Station	281
Figure 5.3: Plan of 1999 proposal for Devon Station	283
Figure 5.4: Section elevation of the TranSystems “Option 1” for Devon Station	288
Figure 5.5: Plan of the TranSystems “Option 1” for Devon Station	288
Figure 5.6: Section elevation of the TranSystems “Option 2” for Devon Station	289
Figure 5.7: Plan of the TranSystems “Option 2” for Devon Station	289
Figure 5.8: Satellite view of area surrounding Devon Station	292

Figure 5.9: Property for rent in Berwyn, Pa.	294
Figure 5.10: Property for rent in Wayne, Pa.	294
Figure 5.11: Property for rent in Berwyn, Pa.	294
Figure 5.12: Property for rent in Devon, Pa.	294
Figure C.1: Cynwyd Station, 2011	299
Figure C.2: Sharon Hill Station, 2010	299
Figure C.3: Philadelphia & Columbia interpretive display at Merion	302
Figure C.4: Philadelphia & Columbia mural at Bala Cynwyd	302
Figure C.5: PRR mural at Ardmore	303
Figure C.6: PRR mural at Ardmore, detail	303

LIST OF MAPS

Map I.1: The Main Line	7
Map I.2: The Main Line of Public Works	8
Map I.3: The Main Line in Relation to Philadelphia	9
Map 5.1: The area surrounding Devon Station	292

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Main Line Stations: Architecture	34
Table 2.2: Main Line Stations: Figures and Designations	35

INTRODUCTION

“Old Maids Never Wed And Have Babies.” “Really Vicious Retrievers Snap Willingly, Snarl Dangerously. Beagles Don’t, Period.”

Unless you are from the Main Line, these two phrases probably seem like just some pointless old sayings. In truth, they are mnemonic devices that have been used for decades and passed down through generations of Main Liners. The first sentence gives hints to the names of the eastern end of “Paoli Local” railroad stops in order from east to west (Overbrook, Merion, Narberth, Wynnewood, Ardmore, Haverford, Bryn Mawr), while the second takes the line all the way to its western end (Rosemont, Villanova, Radnor, St. Davids, Wayne, Strafford, Devon, Berwyn, Daylesford, and Paoli).

So important to Main Line life are the stations of the Paoli Local that such devices were necessary, and well-known. The popularity and interest in these town names, chosen largely by the Pennsylvania Railroad for their interesting sounds and Old World associations, has spawned a multitude of stories, including one from the dawn of the personal computer age. In 1983, a graphic designer named Susan Kare, who had graduated from a Main Line high school twelve years previously, was hired by Apple Computer to create graphical fonts for the first Macintosh computer. When it came time to name the fonts, Kare thought back to those interesting titles of Paoli Local stops, including Overbrook, Merion, Ardmore and Rosemont. Apple CEO Steve Jobs liked the idea of using city names, but “not little cities that nobody’s heard of,” he told

Kare. “They ought to be *world class* cities!” As a result, the fonts “Chicago,” “New York” and “Geneva” were created, among others.¹

The Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) was once the largest corporation in the world. When it dissolved with the fall of America’s great railroads in the mid-20th century, it left behind a vast network of infrastructure, including train cars, bridges, towering urban stations and small suburban depots. Some of these material remnants dated all the way back to the beginnings of the railroad, when it operated a few lines in some of the more populous regions of Pennsylvania. By the time it ceased being a company, the PRR had operations all over the continental United States.

Among the first towns to be served by what would become the “Standard Railroad of the World” were those along the “Main Line,” a stretch of suburbs west of Philadelphia that earned its nickname from the railroad itself. Life in these suburbs, populated by many commuters with white-collar jobs in Philadelphia, was so intertwined with the railroad that when the PRR ceased to be, the railroad could not simply fade away. Through takeovers by various subsequent organizations, the line remained an important commuter railroad. The line’s current operators, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak), still utilize a great amount of Pennsylvania Railroad-constructed infrastructure on the Main Line, including Victorian-era railroad stations designed and built by the PRR.

The majority of Pennsylvania Railroad-constructed stations on the Main Line continue to be in use today. Many retain a high degree of architectural integrity, and are examples of railroad

¹ Kare, Susan. “World Class Cities.”
http://folklore.org/StoryView.py?project=Macintosh&story=World_Class_Cities.txt

architecture that boast the strength and aesthetic superiority of the long-defunct Pennsylvania Railroad. The Main Line is a desirable area in terms of real estate values, thanks partly to railroad access, and each station is still patronized by hundreds of passengers per day. Although some have been converted for use as rented office and vending spaces, others (some of the most intact and significant among them) sit vacant, full of possibility. Their re-use as rentable space would result in several positive outcomes: the owner of the stations, Amtrak, would earn income from leasing their existing properties; the operator of commuter services, SEPTA, would have safe, guarded stations; the passengers who use the stations and platforms would have more attractive, better cared-for places to wait for their trains; and the surrounding communities would have historic symbols of which to be proud. It is important that the stations and their futures be examined now, as many are losing historic fabric at an unfortunate rate, and some are set to be renovated by the transit agencies in the very near future.

This thesis examines both the integrity and history of each of the 17 stations (plus one no longer on the current route) of the Main Line, from the viewpoint of the railroad, the region, and each individual community. To understand the character and integrity of the stations, each was visited, examined, and thoroughly photographed in 2010 and 2011. Compiling the history of the stations was an effort that involved consulting a large number of sources, including rare books and documents found in various libraries, historical societies and archives. In the search for historical photographs, local historical societies were most useful and personally hospitable. Gerald Francis and Ted Goldsborough of the Lower Merion Historical Society were very helpful, for access to their archives as well as for opening the doors of their Cynwyd Station project. The

Radnor Historical Society, a frequent haunt of the author, was an invaluable resource, and thanks go to its president, Ted Pollard, and all other volunteers there. The Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society and its president, Roger Thorne, were also helpful, and their website's digitized versions of the society's *History Quarterly* journal were invaluable in providing histories of stations in those townships.

As the amount of paperwork from the Pennsylvania Railroad is vast, and has been scattered, a number of archives were essential to telling the stories of the stations. The Athenaeum of Philadelphia, Library Company of Philadelphia, Temple University Urban Archives and Winterthur Museum Library (J. William Shaw collection) provided many of the items and information found on these pages. The Lehigh University library provided access to and copies from issues of the *Railroad Gazette* from the 1870s. Perhaps most substantially, the Hagley Museum and Library has a unique archive of Pennsylvania Railroad correspondences and contracts, and its resident PRR expert Chris Baer is a wonderful resource himself. This list would be remiss without mentioning the sources that could not be visited for this thesis: the Railroad Museum of Pennsylvania, Pennsylvania State Archives, Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society archives at Lewistown, and the National Archives.

Long before this thesis was begun, James ("Steve") Goodwin of SEPTA gave the author extensive access to the restoration project at Wayne Station, and later led a tour of the publicly inaccessible portions of Devon Station. Natalia Bobak and Rusty Acchione of SEPTA were also very helpful. Carl Doebley of TranSystems provided backstory of the restorations of Overbrook, Radnor and Strafford Stations. Converse Winkler Architects graciously gave me access to their

future plans for Villanova Station. The archives of Easttown Township revealed the history of development proposals for Devon Station.

The Pennsylvania Railroad retains a large fan base; they are invaluable consultants when writing about any PRR-related topic. Among those who helped were Phil Ritter and Ted Xaras, as well as the many contributors to online PRR discussion groups. Finally, Jim Higgins of the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association provided exceptional insight into the founding of the group; this which formed the basis of chapter five.

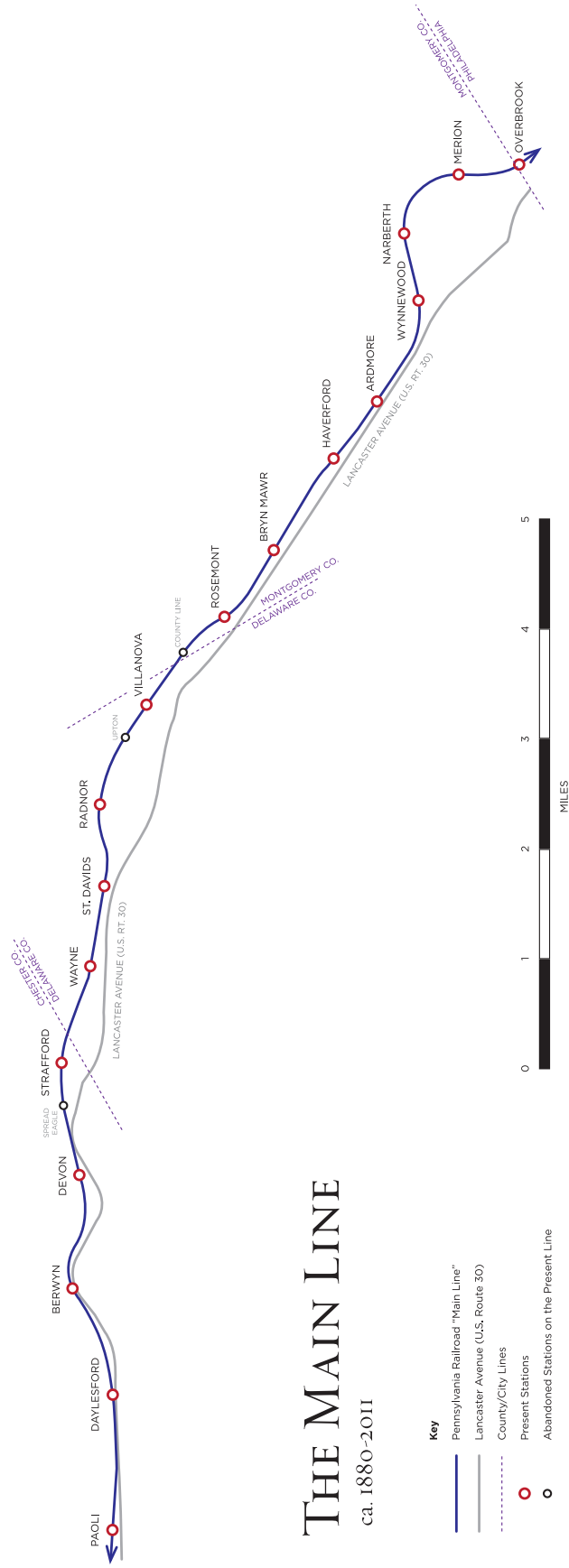
While the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad as a whole is documented in a number of books,, the Main Line and its famous “Paoli Local” commuter train has always been treated as a singular entity. Meanwhile, the history of each station has been addressed tangentially in histories of their respective towns, but these rarely consider the Main Line as a whole. What I have attempted to do in this thesis is to link the histories of all of the stations, as each depends on and shares traits with the others, thus providing a proper context for the description and analysis of each station’s history and architecture..

The first two chapters of this thesis provide background information on the stations and the region that they serve. Chapter one summarizes the history of the Pennsylvania Railroad and its predecessors on the Main Line. While more extensive histories have been written about the entire railroad system and the PRR’s corporation and personalities, this chapter looks at the railroad from the perspective of the Main Line. The chapter then studies the history and culture of the Main Line. An area legendary for its opulence, it was partly because of the railroad, and the executives who lived there, that the Main Line earned its fame. Chapter two summarizes the

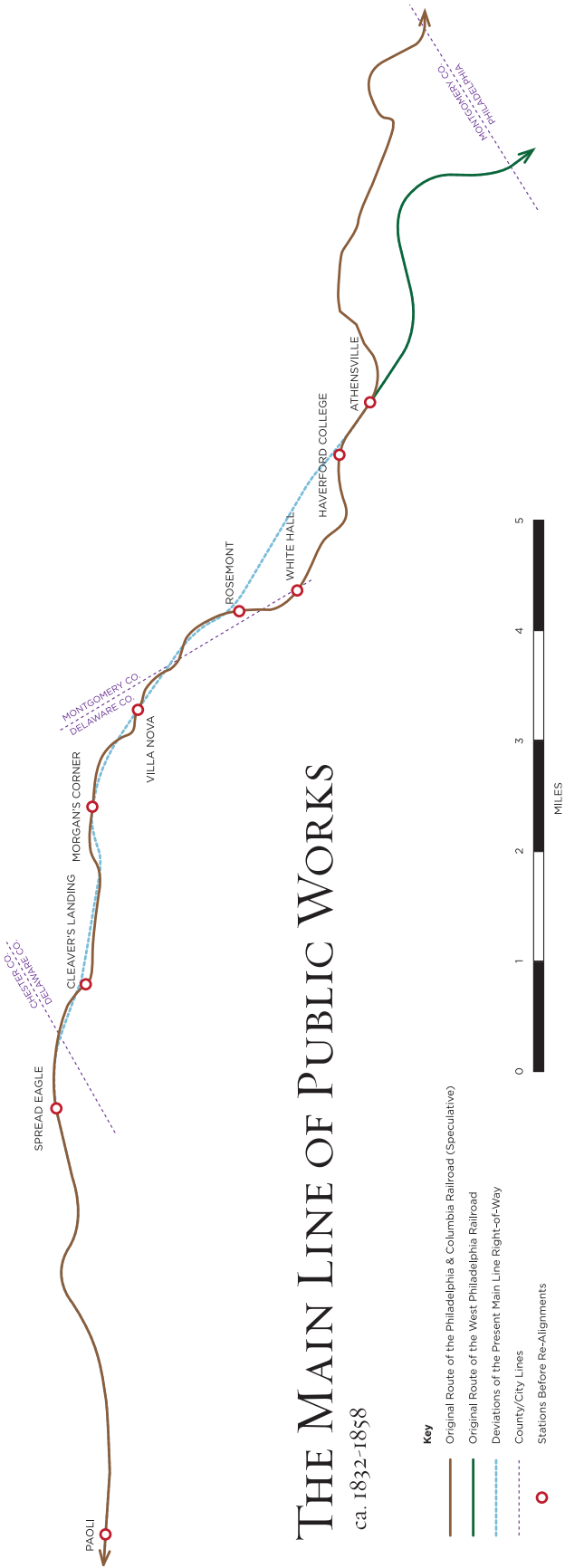
history of each station, one by one. It is split into 18 parts, examining the histories, contexts and current conditions of each station. The stations are discussed in order of construction, not geography, so as to show how stations from similar time periods relate to each other. The 18 parts of this chapter are accompanied by historical and contemporary images.

Chapters three through five are analyses based on background data collected for chapter two. Chapter three is an examination of the architectural significance of the stations, looking at the differences and similarities of each in terms of design, and the Pennsylvania Railroad's strategic thinking behind each. This chapter also briefly looks into the lives of the architects who designed the stations, and how they fit into these architects' larger bodies of work. Chapter four is the first of two case studies: an analysis of the recent multi-million dollar restoration of Wayne Station. By examining the renovation processes of the current owners and operators of the railroad, one may see how future restorations might be executed. Chapter five is the second case study, looking at the potential of Devon Station. A building exhibiting exceptional integrity, Devon is nonetheless languishing. This chapter examines past development proposals, the business potential for restoring the station today, and the incredible amount of historic fabric that can be brought back to life with a future conversion into usable space.

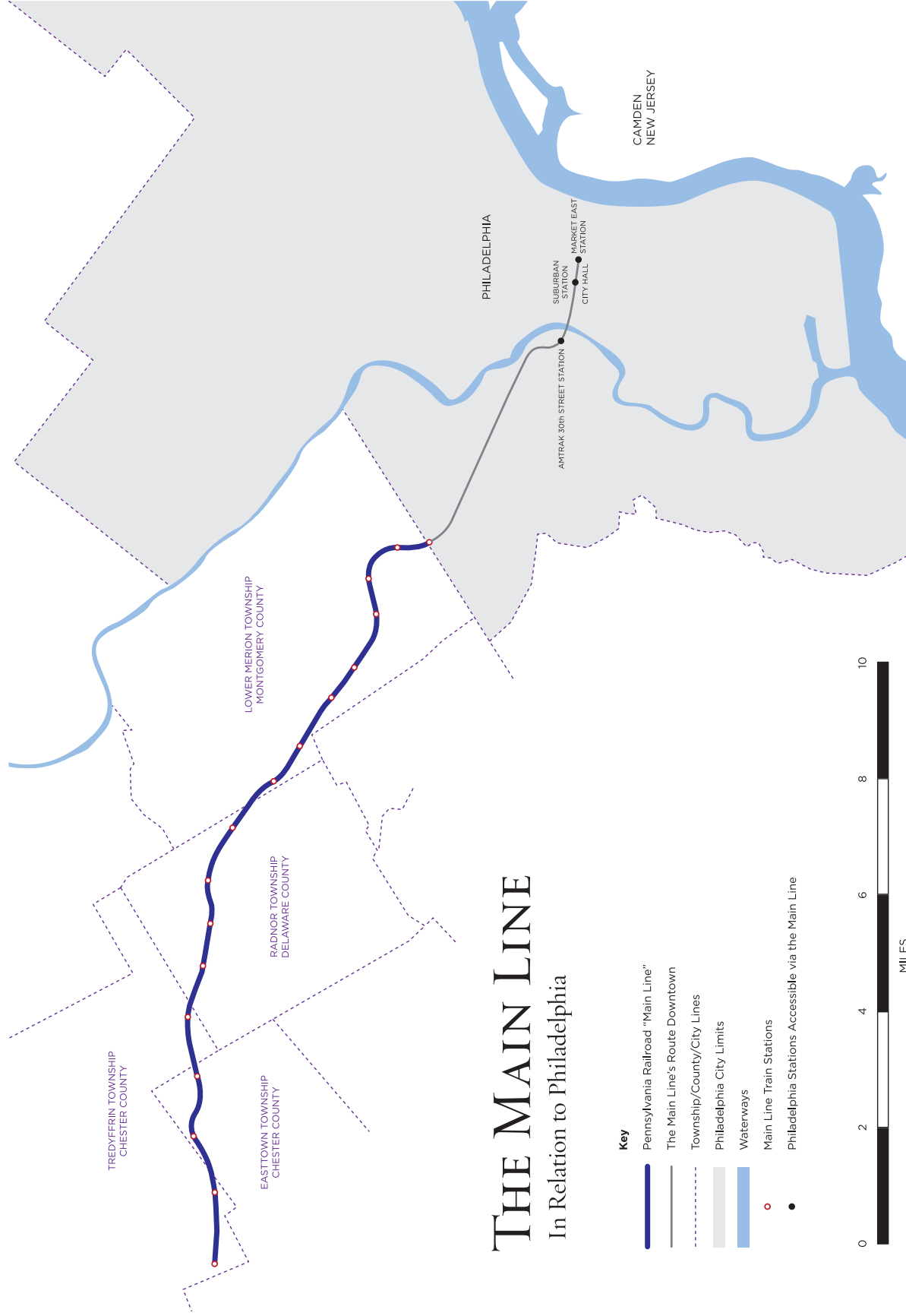
This thesis concludes with an examination of community efforts to help restore their stations, and how such efforts can advise future endeavors. It ponders how, in the future, such community groups can form a coalition to learn from each other and take ownership of their stations' futures.



Map I.1



Map I.2



Map I.3

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND HISTORY: THE RAILROAD AND THE MAIN LINE

The Main Line of Public Works

The name “Main Line” dates all the way back to 1834, taken from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s massive engineering feat known as the “Main Line of Public Works.” Following the success of the Erie Canal in New York, the Main Line of Public Works began engineering and construction in 1826, and was completed eight years later. The system consisted mostly of canals, but unlike the system in New York, geographic constraints necessitated the use of railroads in some places, the longest of which was the Columbia-Philadelphia Railroad (sometimes referred to as the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad or P&C). This 82 mile long railroad allowed passengers to board a horse-drawn rail car at Broad and Vine Streets in downtown Philadelphia, and ride all the way to Columbia, Lancaster County. There, the traveller could transfer to a canal boat, and with a few more transfers, ride to Pittsburgh, Erie or other points west.

Prior to the Main Line of Public Works, the Lancaster turnpike was the primary road connecting Philadelphia and cities to its west. Also chartered by the Pennsylvania legislature, the turnpike was authorized in 1792 and opened in 1795. It too was a toll road, laid with gravel and wood planks. Horse-drawn “Conestoga” wagons commonly operated on the turnpike, and travel was slow. Accommodations along the way were plentiful, with taverns and inns lining the turnpike every couple of miles.

Railroad construction was a new, experimental kind of engineering in the early 19th century that resulted in expensive projects. The rails for the P&C were imported from Wales and

attached to stone “sleeper” blocks along most of the line. Each mile of track cost about \$13,000 to construct.¹ A surveyor, Major John Wilson, was hired by the Canal Commission to determine the best route, following his recommendation that the land between Philadelphia and Columbia was unsuitable for a canal. The initial survey was conducted in 1827-8, with Wilson’s teenaged son, William Hasell Wilson, on the survey team.²

Construction of the Main Line of Public Works was rapid for such a large system. With expediency came cutting corners when it came to the P&C railroad. To avoid having to alter the topography of the landscape west of Philadelphia, the railroad avoided any hills. Though it followed the basic route of the Lancaster turnpike, it often deviated, favoring flatter surfaces that resulted in a multitude of grade crossings where it crisscrossed over the road. Most of the original stops on the railroad corresponded with extant inns on the turnpike, so that the railroad did not have to build its own structures. These included the Spread Eagle and Paoli within today’s “Main Line” region, and the Green Tree and Ship inns farther west. The General Wayne Inn, a famous institution in Merion, was just north of the railroad, but also serviced it.

From Belmont to about twenty miles westward, the railroad opened in September, 1832. Remaining portions opened one at a time until the entire two-track system (allegedly the largest in the world) was complete two years later. The ceremonial opening of the system took place on October 7, 1834, with a trip by two engine-driven trains containing the Governor, Canal Commissioners, State officials, railroad engineers and guests. The inaugural 82-mile trek from Columbia to Philadelphia began at 8 a.m. and finished at 6 p.m. Residents along the route turned

¹ W.H. Wilson, 16-17.

² W.H. Wilson, 8-12.

out to show their enthusiasm at the passing train.³ The Commonwealth operated the railroad much like a toll road. Freight cars, passenger cars and even some structures were owned and maintained by individuals or private companies. Rail cars ran one at a time, as teams of horses could only pull one car. Shortly after the railroad opened, steam locomotives were introduced for operation, and for a short time both horse-drawn and steam-powered trains operated together on the P&C. Freight cars could carry three to four tons each, and special sidings were constructed so that horse-drawn cars could “pull over” to let steam engines pass. Horse-drawn cars slowed down the system, and were banned in 1844. Matthias Baldwin, founder of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, is said to have made eight of his first ten locomotives for the P&C, which were ordered in 1834.⁴ In later years, Baldwin would be a major locomotive manufacturer, and the company would remain in business until 1972.

The railroad met the city limits of Philadelphia at the Belmont Incline, just west of the Schuylkill River and north of the future grounds of the 1876 Centennial Exposition. From Belmont, the railroad was forced to descend and ascend the plateau via cable on an inclined plane. The plane became famous in 1836, when the Norris Locomotive Works demonstrated that a steam-powered locomotive could ascend the steep hill without aid. East of Belmont, the railroad crossed the Schuylkill River on a wooden seven-span covered bridge. Sold to the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad in 1851, a year after the Belmont branch was abandoned, the bridge was replaced by the P&R in 1886 and again in 1920, with a concrete bridge that remains in service for CSX freight traffic. It is still referred to as the “Columbia Railroad Bridge.”⁵

³ W.H. Wilson, 24-25.

⁴ Lynch, 9.

⁵ Wikipedia: “Columbia Railroad Bridge.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_Railroad_Bridge

SEASON ARRANGEMENT OF PASSENGER TRAINS,

To commence on the First day of April, 1837, and
continue until further notice.

COLUMBIA AND PHILADELPHIA RAIL-WAY.

A *Through Train* for the accommodation of Western Passengers will leave the vicinity of
Broad & Callowhill Streets,

Philadelphia for Columbia

Each Morning exactly at 6 o'clock, and will

Arrive at	H. M.	Tarry MINUTES.	and Start at	H. M.
Brookeville	7 30	30 (Breakfast)		8
Paoli,	8 30	5		8 35
Downingtown.	9 25	5		9 30
Parkesburg,	10 25	5		10 30
Leaman's,	11	5		11 5
Lancaster.	12	15		12 15
Columbia,	1 30	to Dine on Board the Boats.		

A *Through Train* for Eastern Passengers will leave

Columbia for Philadelphia,

At 8 o'clock *precisely*, each morning, and will

Arrive at	H. M.	Tarry MINUTES.	Start at	H. M.
Lancaster,	9	15		9 15
Leaman's,	10	5		10 5
Parkesburg,	10 55	5		11
Downingtown,	11 45	5		11 50
Paoli,	12 35	5		12 40
Eagle,	1	10 (for refreshment)		1 10
Philadelphia,	3	(to dine, as the Passengers may think proper.)		

The Travelling Public are hereby informed that not the slightest deviation from the foregoing Arrangements will be permitted. It should also be understood that Passengers leaving **Philadelphia for Pittsburg** will at the latter place as soon by keeping the Rail Road to Columbia, as by any other route, in consequence of the fact that all who leave Philadelphia in the morning, no matter what intermediate route they may take, must pass the Portage Rail Road together. It may also be remarked that, by taking the State route, only ONE Transhipment of Baggage will be necessary between Philadelphia and the Portage, and dinner will be ready at the usual hour aboard the Boats, without causing any delay. By this arrangement the Passengers will not be detained all night at Hollidaysburg, as was the case last season.

A Train for the Accommodation of Way Passengers will leave

COLUMBIA for PHILADELPHIA

Every Morning at 11 o'clock, and a like Train will *Leave Philadelphia* each Morning at the same hour, stopping at the following named points:

EASTERN TRAIN.

Leave Basin at	H. M.	Arrive at	H. M.
Mountville	11 50	Coatesville	3
" Hempfield	12 15	" Gallagherville	3 20
" Lancaster (dine)	12 30	" Downingtown	3 40
" Bird-in-Hand	1 30	" Oakland	4 15
" Leaman's	1 50	" Steamboat	4 15 30
" Kinser's	2	" Paoli	4 45 30
" Gap	2 10	" Eagle	5
" Pennington's	2 30	" Brookeville	5 20 30
" Parkesburg	2 45	" Whitehall	5 40 30
		" Philadelphia	6 30 30

WESTERN TRAIN.

Leave Philadelphia at	H. M.	Arrive at	H. M.
Whitehall	12 20	Parkesburg	3 15
" Brookeville	12 40	" Pennington's	3 35
" Eagle	1	" Gap,	4 10
" Paoli (to dine)	1 20	" Kinser's	4 25
" Steamboat	1 50	" Leaman's	4 35
" Oakland	2 10	" Bird-in-Hand	5 10
" Downingtown	2 25	" Lancaster	5 40
" Gallagherville	3 35	" Hempfield	6 *
" Coatesville	3	" Mountville	6 20
		" Columbia	7

A. MEHAFFEY,
Sup't Col. & Phila. R. R.

Fig. 1.1: 1837 timetable of the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad (here called the "Columbia and Philadelphia Rail-Way"). Listed stations of the future "Main Line" are Paoli, Eagle, Brookeville (Radnor) and Whitehall. (From W.H. Wilson, 19)

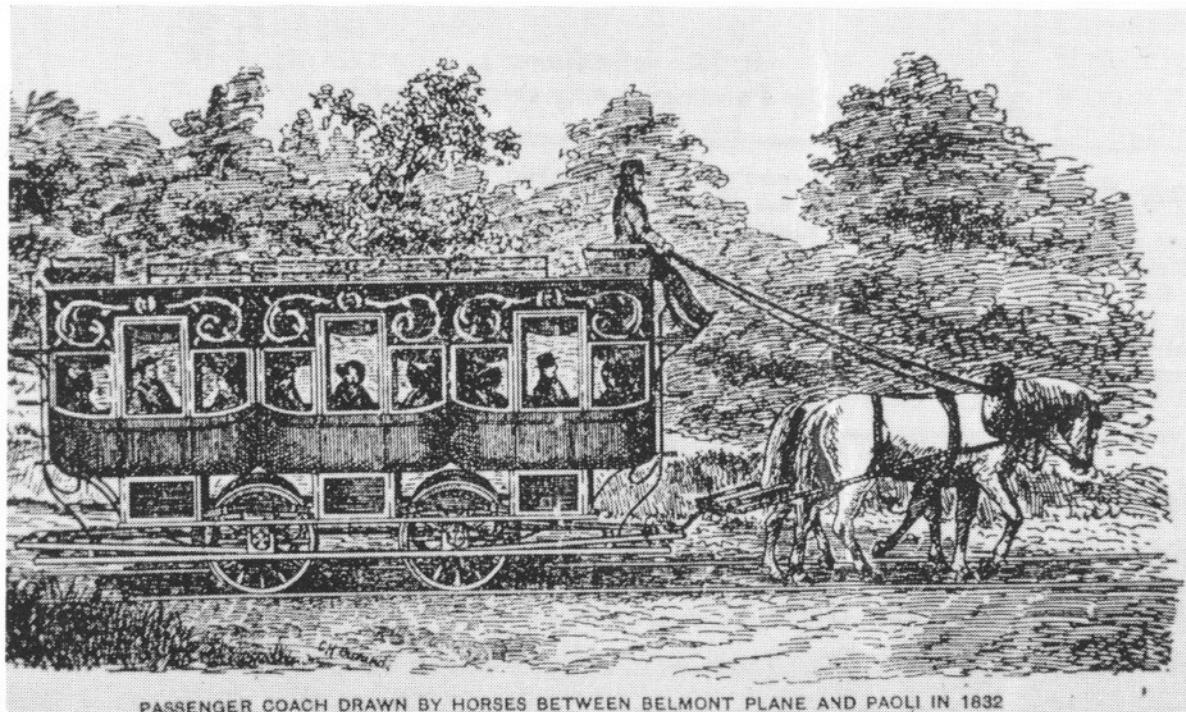
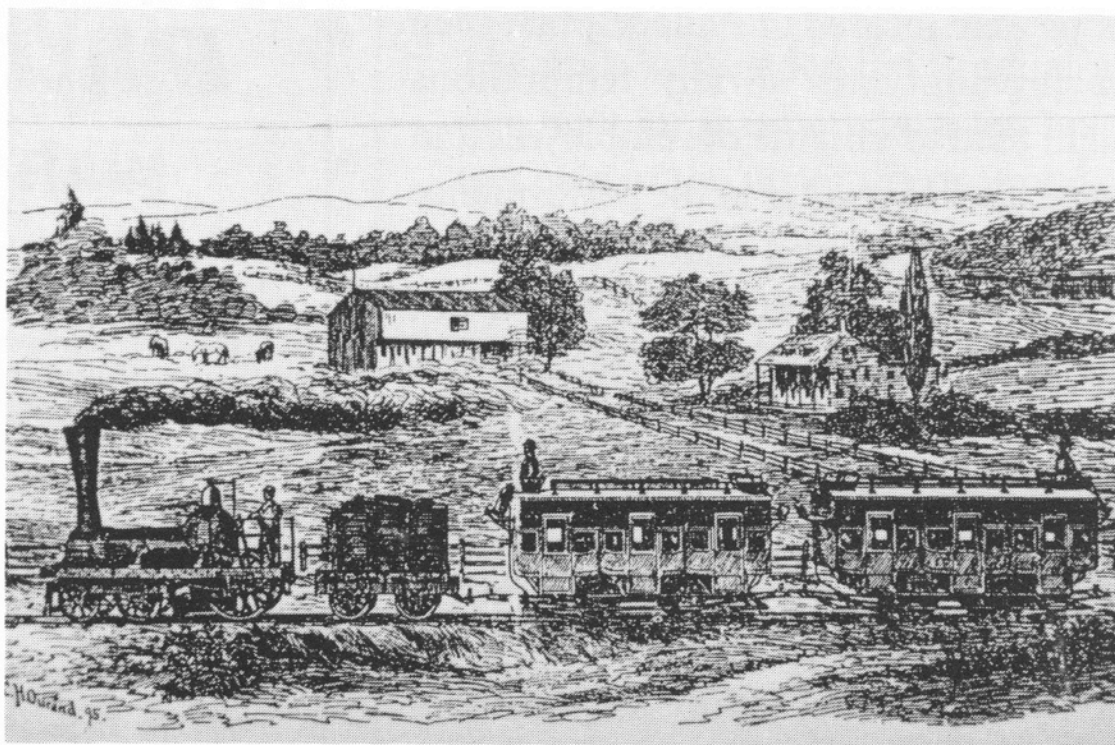


Fig. 1.2, 1.3: These two 1895 sketches by C.H. Ourand do not date to the time of the Philadelphia & Columbia, but they do show two types of travel on the P&C. The early horse-drawn single cars (above), and similar cars drawn by steam locomotives (below). (Collection of Ted Xaras, via *The High Line*, June, 1997)



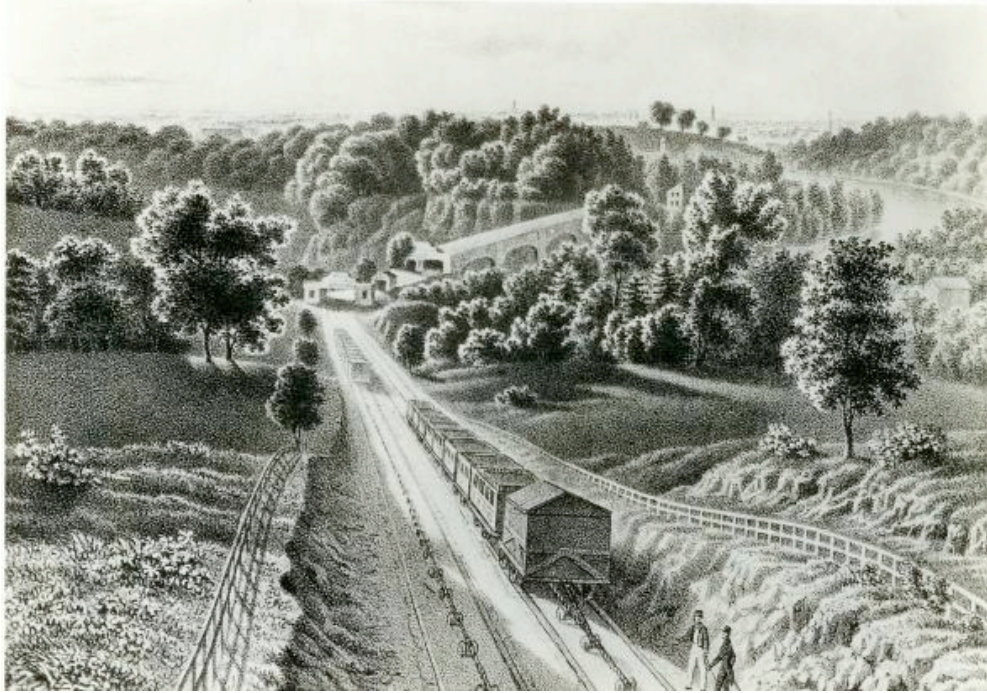


Fig. 1.4: An 1838 lithograph of the Belmont Incline, looking east. At the base of the hill is the covered bridge over the Schuylkill River, with Philadelphia in the distance. (Pennsylvania State Archives, via www.explorepahistory.com)

Fig. 1.5: The Norris Brothers' "Tioga" steam locomotive, made for the P&C. This daguerreotype, photographed ca. 1849, is thought to be one of the earliest railroad photographs ever taken. (Smithsonian Institution, via railroadheritage.org)



The West Philadelphia Railroad

The Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad followed the basic path of today's Main Line east of Paoli, until it reached Ardmore. During the P&C's time the town was known as "Athensville," and there it forged northward, paralleling Montgomery Avenue and on to Belmont. The Main Line's east end, from Overbrook to Ardmore, was constructed as the West Philadelphia Railroad, a line chartered in 1835 that aimed to avoid the troublesome Belmont Plane. Its eastern terminus at the Schuylkill River, the West Philadelphia Railroad met the P&C at Ardmore.

The operators of the P&C realized that their inclined planes at either end of the line were inefficient. In 1840, the line was relocated at Columbia, thus eliminating the incline at the railroad's west end. As traffic increased, the load on Belmont's incline slowed progress significantly. In 1849, the Pennsylvania Legislature decided to finally abandon the Belmont incline, adopting the failed West Philadelphia Railroad route to enter the city. This line crossed the Schuylkill River via the Market Street Bridge, which the city strengthened to handle the load of trains. This new detour was opened on October 14, 1850, and the old route through the city to Belmont was sold to the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad; the P&R later bought the line from Belmont to Ardmore just for the tracks.⁶

The West Philadelphia Railroad curved north in order to avoid a hill. By the time the Pennsylvania Railroad began straightening the old P&C route west of Ardmore in the 1870s, it had already established stations on the former West Philadelphia route (Overbrook, Merion, Elm [Narberth], and Wynnewood), so they never bothered to attempt to straighten the curve.

⁶ *Triumph II*, 21.

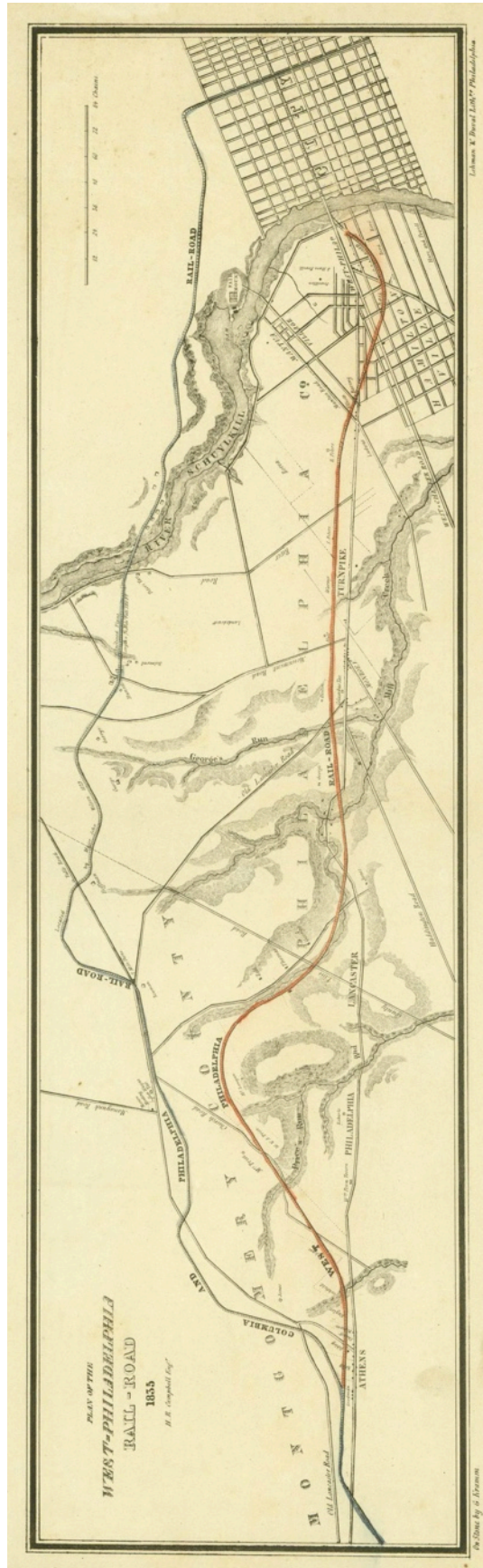


Fig. 1.6: This 1835 map shows the route of the West Philadelphia Railroad (in red) and the Philadelphia & Columbia's climb to the Belmont Incline (in blue). The two met at Ardmore, where the West Philadelphia Railroad terminated; in 1850 the P&C would abandon their route to Belmont and adopt the old West Philadelphia route to enter the city. The lithograph is by Lehman and Duval; the engraver was H.R. Campbell. (Historical Society of Frankford, via www.philageohistory.org)

The Pennsylvania Railroad

Intent on extending the railroad west of Lancaster, the legislature of Pennsylvania chartered the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1846 as a part of the Main Line of Public Works. The plan was to provide continuous rail service between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, without transfers to canals. Pennsylvania's ownership of the line connecting Lancaster with Philadelphia was seen as an annoyance to the PRR. In 1852, the railroad hired engineer William Hasell Wilson, who had gained experience under his father surveying the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad, to help survey a line into Philadelphia via Phoenixville, Pa. Work on this line, which would have been straighter than and about the same length as the Main Line, stopped in 1857, when the state conceded and sold the Main Line of Public Works to the PRR, which by then had become successful enough to take over the system.⁷

At best, the operation of the Main Line of Public Works could have been considered a learning experience for the newly formed Pennsylvania Railroad, which itself had operated passenger service on the line since 1853. The Commonwealth had failed in its mission to provide a valuable service to its residents or to earn revenue from the system. For one thing, the railroads were crippled by the loss of the canals in the winter; the P&C was unable to provide continuous service across the state when the water was frozen. What's more, the stone slabs used as railroad ties proved to be unreliable, an expensive engineering blunder. As noted in *The History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company*:

“The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was the first government to foster the building of railroads, and to assume their management, and the first to discover that the operating of that class of property was a business function not lodged in the administration of civil government, but was one that could be best

⁷ W.H. Wilson, 33-34.

performed by a subordinate corporation . . . it bled at every pore and suffered all manner of woes at the hands of partisan politicians, who knew no law other than their own greed, no virtue but their own appetites.”⁸

The purchase of the Main Line of Public Works was about more than overtaking Pennsylvania’s troubled railroad. It was the final piece of the puzzle of the PRR’s non-stop route connecting Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. There were many challenges and obstacles to building that route, not the least of which was the Allegheny mountain range. In 1854 the PRR completed the “Horseshoe Curve,” an engineering necessity that became a tourist attraction in itself. Because construction was completed quickly, it was forced to contain many inclined planes, which were eventually eliminated.

W.H. Wilson was hired by the Pennsylvania Railroad as Resident Engineer of the Philadelphia & Columbia branch at the time of its purchase from the commonwealth. One of Wilson’s immediate decisions was to erect station houses for passengers and freight. The P&C had not provided these amenities, and instead depended on existing structures or tiny square sheds erected by passenger ferrying operations. Wilson’s role was soon upgraded to Chief Engineer, and his responsibilities grew to oversee the entire line to Pittsburgh.⁹ Examples on the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s infrastructure improvements included stations at Overbrook, Merion and White Hall. Building work slowed during the Civil War, when the railroad’s engineering department was kept busy with keeping the railroad secure.¹⁰

⁸ W.B. Wilson, 40.

⁹ W.H. Wilson, 38-40.

¹⁰ W.H. Wilson, 40-41.

After the war, the railroad's efforts were put back to growing and improving the railroad. The long, meandering Philadelphia & Columbia route underwent an arduous process of being straightened. One of the biggest dips in its course was the southward detour to White Hall, and in 1869, the effort to build a cutoff north of the old station had begun. The Bryn Mawr cutoff project afforded the railroad an opportunity to increase ridership. Under W.H. Wilson, the railroad bought tracts of land surrounding the future site of Bryn Mawr Station on the new stretch of the railroad. The new station became the showpiece of the company, and in 1872 the railroad completed construction of the Bryn Mawr Hotel (also known as the Keystone Hotel), just north of the station and within walking distance. From 1869 through 1886, Wilson was in charge of several properties in Bryn Mawr, as well as their streets, plantings and infrastructure. Wilson chose the name "Bryn Mawr" for the new town that he and the railroad created, taking influence from the early Welsh influence of the region.¹¹ The town that was started by the railroad flourished, and in 1885 became home to Bryn Mawr College.

W.H. Wilson gave much more to the Pennsylvania Railroad than his engineering expertise and entrepreneurial ideas. Taking after their father, grandfather and Scottish forebears, Wilson's three sons were involved in the railroad and together formed the Wilson Brothers & Company, Architects. The firm had Joseph M. Wilson and Frederick G. Thorn as architects, and John A. Wilson and later Henry W. Wilson as civil engineers. Joseph M. Wilson and Thorn, as employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad, designed the Main Line's early 1870s-era stations, but it was not until the Centennial Exposition of 1876 that they split from the company and the firm of Wilson Brothers & Company was established. The architects continued their work for the

¹¹ W.H. Wilson, 62. Wilson took credit in his memoirs, but he probably got the name from the nearby estate of Rowland Ellis.

Pennsylvania Railroad, but also contributed designs to competing companies, such as the still extant Reading Terminal in Philadelphia. From the initial surveying of the Philadelphia & Columbia in the 1820s to the designing of stations through the 1880s, the Wilson family's impact on the Main Line over three generations was extraordinary.

In the early 1870s, the PRR constructed a great many stations along the Main Line, starting with Bryn Mawr. No stations were built from 1873 to 1881, however, possibly because of the Depression of 1873. When construction resumed, architecture had taken a leap ahead of the stately gray stone depots of the 1870s to brick or Shingle and Stick style examples of asymmetry.

The construction of the ornate Main Line stations represented the Pennsylvania Railroad's lavishness and attention to detail. The railroad was also becoming an engineering power, as evidenced in 1875, when the historic Market Street Bridge burned. This bridge over the Schuylkill River opened in 1805 and was adapted for railroad use in 1850 with the abandonment of the Belmont Plane and the adoption of the West Philadelphia Railroad route. The railroad's only route into Philadelphia from the west, the bridge burned on November 20, 1875. On November 29, after only 90 hours of labor, a temporary bridge was ready for service.¹²

The railroad's power and influence continued to grow throughout the latter half of the 19th century. A great symbol of this growth was built in Philadelphia, directly across from City Hall. Broad Street Station, started in 1881 with a Wilson Brothers & Company design, was enlarged exponentially in 1892 by Furness, Evans & Co. This new addition added a train shed with massive iron trusses, and expanded offices for the PRR leadership. The eastern terminus of

¹² W.B. Wilson, 16.

the entire railroad, trains from far and wide landed at Broad Street, atop the monolithic stone embankment known as the “Chinese Wall.” After several fires, Broad Street Station was closed and demolished in the mid-20th century, and the Chinese Wall was removed to create John F. Kennedy Blvd.

The outreach of the railroad outgrew its very name. Service to New York, for example, was made possible through the construction of the impressive Pennsylvania Station in Manhattan, a structure that solidified the PRR’s national standing. The railroad connected to other cities such as Washington DC, Chicago, and many other large cities in the East and Midwest. Its reach was nearly unfathomable, and its power unsurpassable. At one time, the Pennsylvania Railroad was the largest publicly traded corporation in the world.

Change came to the Main Line in 1915, with the installation of overhead electrical wires. The Main Line was used as an experimental zone for this type of railroad power, and steam trains were eliminated for local travel. The PRR’s MP54-type cars were put into service at this time, and were in continuous use through the 1960s. The 1950s saw the birth of the first “Silverliners,” designed to replace the aging MP54s. Reacting to the explosive growth of automotive traffic, and fears of congestion on new highways, the City of Philadelphia partnered with the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia & Reading Railroads in 1958 to decrease fares, increase service and put the new Silverliners in commuter service. Known for their distinctive ribbed stainless steel shells, Silverliners were still in use in the 2010s. The oldest of these, the Silverliner II’s, were decommissioned in 2011, just shy of being in continuous use for fifty years.

The Pennsylvania Railroad’s lines were used heavily during World War II, with army freight and even German prisoners of war passing through the Main Line. A constant stream of

traffic flowed past local stops. After the war, the Interstate Highway Act of the 1950s and the construction of the Schuylkill Expressway as a major access road to Philadelphia challenged the dominance of the PRR for local traffic, but it remained brisk. On a larger scale, the company was failing. In 1968, the Pennsylvania Railroad merged with its longtime competitor, the New York Central, to form Penn Central. A business blunder from nearly every perspective, the merger led to the company's bankruptcy.¹³

Entire books have been written about the Penn Central's failure, but for prosperous local lines of the Pennsylvania Railroad, including the Main Line, discontinuation of service was never an option. These lines were kept in service by Conrail starting in 1976, until its passenger operations in greater Philadelphia were taken over by the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) in 1983.¹⁴ SEPTA, the semi-governmental organization that already operated the Philadelphia area's bus and traction lines, began operation of the regional rail lines of both the Pennsylvania and Philadelphia & Reading railroads.

Today, SEPTA still operates local service on these lines, with the Paoli/Thorndale Main Line as its busiest and most profitable. In 1984 it began designating each regional rail line with an "R" designation and color on the map; the Main Line was deemed the "R5" and was colored dark blue. In 2010, SEPTA gave up this system in favor of calling lines by their terminus(es); the "R5" became the "Paoli/Thorndale Line," and all regional rail lines were given a blue-gray standard color so as not to conflict with SEPTA's other colored bus and trolley lines on their official map. This attempt to make travel less confusing, especially for tourists, backfired, and in

¹³ Daughen.

¹⁴ Warner, Bob. "Gould Quits Septa, Repays Expenses." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 19, 1988.

2011 the agency relented to giving each line its own color designation once again. The Paoli/Thorndale Main Line now has a dark green dot on the SEPTA system map.

That SEPTA operates as a non-profit, semi-governmental agency on the infrastructure built by the world's mightiest corporation is perhaps a testament to how far railroads, and America in general, have come since the 19th century. The PRR was able to not only build the most impressive network of rails in the country, spanning mountains and leading to the centers of the nation's greatest cities, but also to build detailed, finely crafted station depots along the way, many of which were unique designs. These remnants of a great American past have been inherited by the transit agencies of today, who continue to use them. What will it take to keep them standing to see the Pennsylvania Railroad's bicentennial?



Fig. 1.7: Pennsylvania Railroad express trains passed through the Main Line on their way to and from Philadelphia and points west. Here, a GG1, the famous locomotive designed by Raymond Loewy, passes Wynnewood pulling many coach cars. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 1.8: A commuter train consisting of six MP54s heads east from Ardmore. All are painted dark green except for one with an older dark red scheme. (Photo by Jeffrey W. Prichard, 1971)





Fig. 1.9: Newly commissioned Pennsylvania Railroad Silverliners. (*Suburban & Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society, 1950s)

Fig. 1.10: Portion of a brochure extolling the benefits of the newly inaugurated Silverliners. (Collection of the author)



The Main Line

The Main Line may get its name from the railroad (more specifically, from the 1832 “Main Line of Public Works”), but it is a unique region with a history and society apart from the railroad, best known for its extravagant personalities and sprawling estates. Perhaps the most fitting symbolic representation of the Main Line was the April, 1950 cover of *Holiday* magazine, which called the area “suburbia at its best.” Inside was James A. Michener’s glowing commentary of the Main Line, touting its amenities and culture as an ideal location for families. The cover painting shows the mansions, churches and rolling hills of this garden spot, punctuated by a fox hunt, a swimming pool, and a lively tennis match. The towers of Philadelphia loom in the distance. Sitting on a cloud above this bucolic scene is an obviously antiquated steam locomotive with angel’s wings pulling two coaches, its passengers in top hats looking down at the scene that the railroad of their era brought to life.

Notably, there is no railroad in the “modern day” scene below. There are scenic highways, but no tracks or train stations. Perhaps it was the rise of automobile use that made such a thing unattractive, or maybe it was the fact that the Main Line’s Victorian-era stations were peeling and crumbling. It’s clear that mid-century, the railroad was thought of as a benevolent ghost of the Main Line’s past, not something to relish using for modern travel. In reality, though the railroad, its old buildings and rickety maroon passenger cars may have seemed antiquated in 1950, it remained an important part of Main Line life, and it continues to be through the present day.

Main Line exploits have been dramatized in productions such as ‘The Philadelphia Story,’ in which Katharine Hepburn portrays a young socialite modeled after real-life Main Line

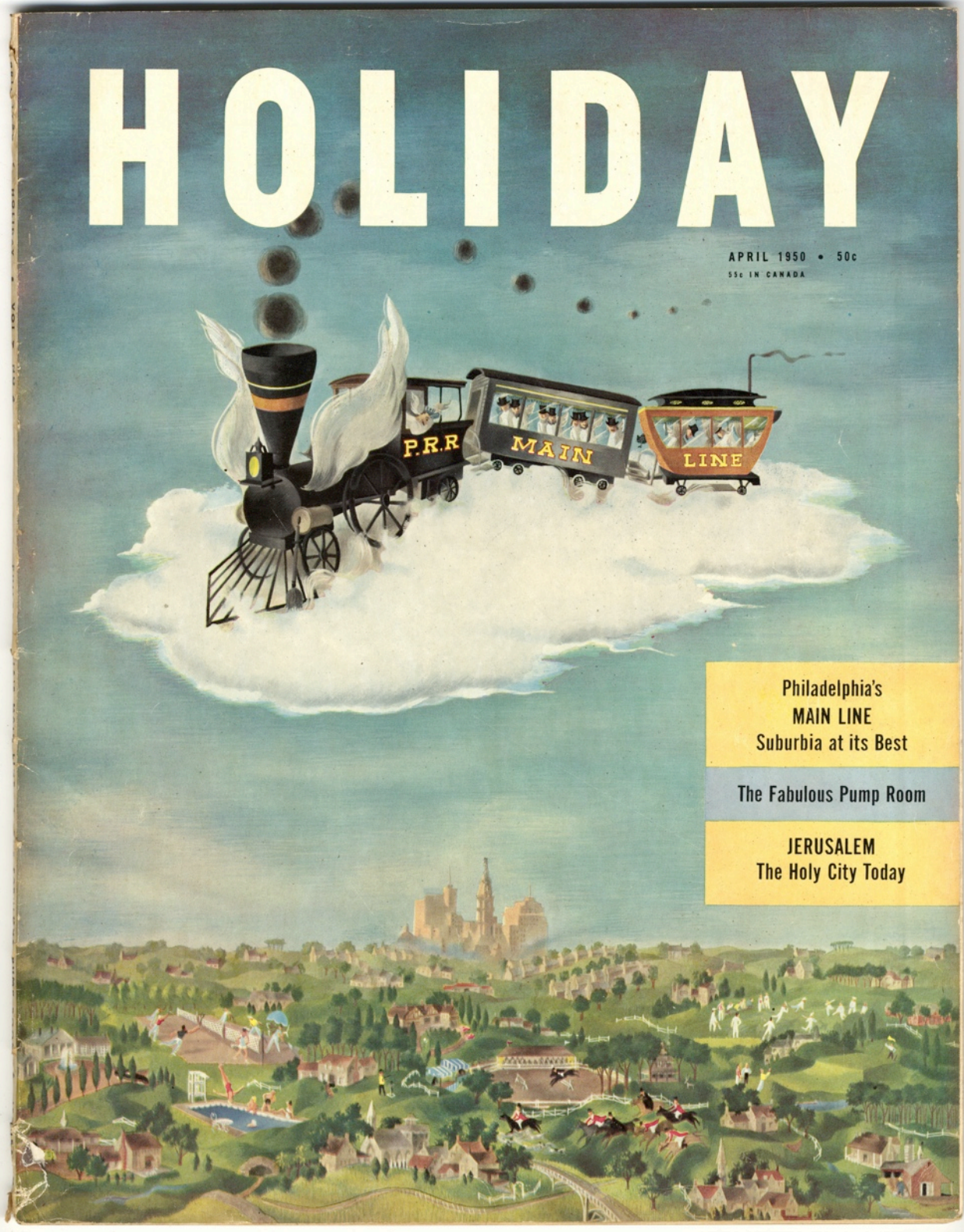


Fig. 1.11: The April, 1950 cover of *Holiday* magazine. This symbolic painting of the Main Line accompanied James A. Michener's article on the suburbs. (Collection of the author)

icon Hope Montgomery Scott. Scott's family home, Ardrossan, remains the Main Line's largest estate still owned by its original family. It still operates as a farm, containing over 50 historic structures, some dating back to the 18th century. As Ardrossan's controlling family ages and one by one its patriarchs and matriarchs fade away, developers hover over the land like vultures. The 360 acres are the most sought after in the Philadelphia area, and the many buildings on the site could soon be at the mercy of McMansions.

Little has changed at Ardrossan over the years, but the same cannot be said for the Main Line as a whole. A mansion designed by Addison Mizner called La Ronda was demolished in 2009 so that a new owner, Joseph Kestenbaum, could build an even bigger house, complete with indoor hockey rink. The Barnes Foundation, a secluded gallery and school of art appreciation located within walking distance of Merion train station, will be moving to Center City, Philadelphia in 2012 after years of prolonged legal battles. Along the main streets of Main Line towns, small apartments above storefronts are being enlarged by developers and sold as \$800,000 condominiums.

Politically, the once very Republican Main Line is taking a swing to the left. John Kerry won Radnor Township in 2004, the first Democratic presidential candidate in history to take that blue-blooded territory. In the same township, the Board of Commissioners became majority Democratic for the first time in 2009. In 2000, future *New York Times* columnist David Brooks described Wayne, a town in the heart of the Main Line and his hometown, as a haven for "bourgeois bohemians" (what he called "bobos") instead of the old WASPs that made the area famous. He noticed a shift from the Main Line of when he grew up, which was stodgy and mundane, to a place where coffee shops were springing up on every corner. Aging ex-hippies

who made it big lived in Wayne and drove Mercedes and BMWs. Old Victorian homes built along the railroad (such as the one where his parents still live) were being sold for more and more money, and were being enlarged to incredible sizes.

This was not the Main Line about which James Michener wrote. Brooks spent even less time talking about the railroad than the 1950 *Holiday* article did. It was still important to many, but the development of new roads like I-476 (the so-called “Blue Route” more than 30 years in planning) meant that Main Liners could commute to booming “edge cities” that the railroad didn’t reach, such as King of Prussia and Conshohocken. The railroad’s impact can still be felt on stormy days when electrical or signal problems paralyze the railroad. The ensuing panic clogs roads and station platforms alike.

Home of the Railroad Gentry

The Main Line was the focus of the Pennsylvania Railroad’s attention in many ways, from the formation of Bryn Mawr as a tourist destination to its experimental triumph in overhead wire technology. However, its importance and upkeep can also be linked to the fact that so many Pennsylvania Railroad executives settled there. The Main Line is famous for being home to important men of all kinds, from bankers and newspaper publishers to beer barons and steel magnates. Their country residences, designed by architects such as Horace Trumbauer, Frank Furness and Peabody & Stearns, still stand as monuments to what made the Main Line legendary.

The railroad brought unprecedented wealth to its executives. It only made sense that they would build their own homes along the railroad’s most famous and beautiful line; besides being

able to keep an eye on operations, they could ride the Paoli Local to their offices at Broad Street Station in private cars.

A man whose name still moves mountains, Alexander J. Cassatt was, among other positions, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad between 1899 and 1906. Cassatt was responsible for the railroad's growth around the turn of the 20th century, involved in such projects as connecting the railroad with New York City. He was also a Main Line trendsetter, building one of the first large architect-designed mansions in the area. "Cheswold," built in 1872, was designed by Henry A. Sims, with additions by Furness & Hewitt in 1880 and Furness, Evans and Company in 1910.¹⁵

Cassatt called Cheswold home, but when he wanted to get away, he went to his country farm, which also happened to be on the Main Line. Chesterbrook Farm was located north of Berwyn Station in Chester County, close to Valley Forge.

Involved with his own community as well as the monstrous railroad, in 1882 Cassatt was elected Supervisor of Lower Merion Township, where Cheswold was located. Among other things, he was responsible for macadamizing Montgomery Avenue (a personal vendetta, as he traveled the road between Cheswold and Chesterbrook) and other roads in the township. Cassatt's obsession with roads led to the formation of the Lancaster Avenue Improvement Company, through which Cassatt and other neighbors bought the venerable old Lancaster Turnpike, the historic road that parallels the Main Line, and collected tolls.¹⁶ Thus Cassatt had a hand in the operation of the Philadelphia area's two busiest thoroughfares: the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Lancaster Turnpike.

¹⁵ Morrison, 18.

¹⁶ Davis, 100.

Among many other PRR officials who called the Main Line home was Stuart Saunders. Chief Executive Officer of the Pennsylvania Railroad from 1963 to 1968, Saunders oversaw both the demolition of New York's Penn Station and the merger of the PRR with New York Central. Each would be disastrous in their own way. He was ousted as Penn Central CEO in 1970 following the company's declaration of bankruptcy. During his time in charge, Saunders felt that commuter operations (such as passenger service on the Main Line) was best made a local interest, not one of the PRR or PC. Saunders' feelings about commuter service became evident when the text of a 1970 phone call between Saunders and prominent Philadelphia lawyer Harold E. Kohn was published the next day in the Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin*. Kohn was upset that his train from 30th Street Station to Devon was 30 minutes late, to which Saunders told him "I would be delighted to give it (the entire commuter operation) to you lock, stock and barrel." Saunders had not intended for this to be published. Although he lived a short distance from Ardmore Station, Saunders preferred to be driven to the city in a chauffeured limousine.¹⁷ That fact alone speaks volumes as to the change in tone (and profitability) between Cassatt's time and Saunders'; 19th century PRR executives made sure that all stations, no matter how small, were in impeccable shape. By the mid-20th century, the railroad was trying hard to spin off those operations.

¹⁷ Daughen, 129-131.

CHAPTER 2

THE STATIONS IN REVIEW

Each station on the Main Line has a unique history, each defined by its surrounding community, architecture, development patterns and contributing individuals. Even the most seemingly uninteresting stations have stories to tell. This chapter examines the history of the 17 stations of the Main Line still in use, as well as one extant station structure that has been re-purposed.

The order of station histories in this chapter is not geographical. They are ordered according to date and development, beginning with Overbrook and White Hall stations in the 1860s, then moving on to the many stations of the 1870s, '80s and '90s, concluding with Merion Station in the 1910s. Although some station structures have had as many as three iterations, the primary focus of these sections (dictating their order) is on the stations that existed during the heyday of the Pennsylvania Railroad, all having been extant together between 1917 and 1952. This period was the most consistent and significant era of the Pennsylvania Railroad on the Main Line.

Each of the 18 sections of this chapter contain a history of the corresponding station, and images from both the historical record and the present day. Rudimentary histories of individual stations are common in literature on Main Line history, but none have been comprehensive or put in the context of the PRR (or Main Line) as a whole. Each section of this chapter is an attempt to amalgamate the historical data and images from these scattered sources, in order to establish the historical significance of the stations.

Table 2.1: Main Line Stations: Architecture

Name	Mile	Date Built	Demolished	Architect	Builder	Identical Stations
Overbrook	5.1	ca. 1858-60	-	Unknown	Unknown	None known
Merion	6.0	1864, ca. 1914-1917	-	Unknown	Unknown	None known
Narberth (Elm)	6.8	1870, ca. 1980	1969	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	Haverford
Wynnewood	7.4	1870	-	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	Strafford (in frame)
Ardmore	8.5	1873, ca. 1957	ca. 1957	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	None known
Haverford	9.1	1870, 1916	-	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	Narberth (Elm)
Bryn Mawr	10.1	ca. 1869-70	1963	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	None known
Rosemont	10.9	1891-2	-	Unknown	William H. Burns	St. Davids, Downingtown, Homewood
Villanova	12.0	ca. 1872	-	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	None known
Radnor	13.0	ca. 1872	-	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	Hawkins
St. Davids	13.7	ca. 1890	1966	Unknown	William H. Burns	Rosemont, Downingtown, Homewood
Wayne	14.5	ca. 1870, ca. 1872-3, 1882-4	-	Washington Bleddyn Powell	William H. Bilyeu	None known
Strafford	15.4	ca. 1872-3 (moved ca. 1884)	-	J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn	Unknown	Wynnewood (in stone)
Devon	16.4	ca. 1882-3	-	Unknown (probably W.B. Powell)	William H. Bilyeu	None known
Berwyn	17.5	1881-2	-	Wilson Bros. & Co.	Hoover, Hughes & Co.	None known
Daylesford	18.6	ca. 1890	1995	Unknown	Unknown	Standard shelter design
Paoli	19.9	1883, ca. 1952-3	ca. 1952	Unknown	William H. Burns	Bala
Former Stations						
White Hall		ca. 1860	-	Unknown		None known
Upton		ca. 1862	1882-1997			

Table 2.2: Main Line Stations: Figures and Designations

Name	Weekday Boardings (2003)	Parking Spaces	Municipality	National Register	PA Register	PHMC Key	PHMC ID	HABS
Overbrook	777	112 daily, 71 permit	Philadelphia	Undetermined	Jan 3, 1985	053142	53048	PA-6143
Merion	261	60 daily, 27 permit	Lower Merion	PHMC: Eligible		097341	97242	PA-6145
Narberth	617	111 daily	Narberth Borough					
Wynnewood	659	117 daily, 131 permit	Lower Merion	PHMC: Eligible, 11/08/1991		097340	97241	PA-6144
Ardmore	822	111 permit, 87 other	Lower Merion					
Haverford	352	80 daily, 89 permit	Lower Merion	PHMC: Eligible, 01/25/1982		079593	79498	
Bryn Mawr	822	46 daily, 143 permit	Lower Merion					PA-1081
Rosemont	304	90 daily, 22 permit	Lower Merion					
Villanova	586	89 daily, 75 permit	Radnor	Undetermined		827801	131702	
Radnor	451	95 daily, 55 permit	Radnor	PHMC: Eligible, 3/22/1993				
St. Davids	224	57 daily	Radnor					
Wayne	650	100 daily, 107 permit	Radnor	Listed 6/21/1999 990000674		106136	106034	
Strafford	898	115 daily, 105 permit	Tredyffrin	Listed 7/26/1984 84003226		079668	79573	PA-268
Devon	458	166 daily, 99 permit	Easttown					
Berwyn	258	88 daily, 30 permit	Easttown	Undetermined		064369	64275	
Daylesford	213	152 daily	Tredyffrin					
Paoli	1462	177 daily, 309 permit	Tredyffrin					
Former Stations								
White Hall				Undetermined		827798	131699	PA-577

OVERBROOK STATION

Built sometime around 1858 or 1860, Overbrook Station is the oldest operating Main Line depot by a margin of more than ten years. It is the last remaining station to exemplify the Gothic details and board and batten façade that typified every almost early station on the Main Line. Its configuration is typical, consisting of a two-story cottage and one-story waiting room. Overbrook is the only Main Line station within the city limits of Philadelphia, although the concrete bridge that casts a shadow over the station's west side marks the city line.

Though in the rural country when it was built, Overbrook Station was surrounded in the 1890s by a development of 413 large homes known as Overbrook Farms. This community was financed by Drexel & Co., and built by Wendell & Smith. Most of these figures had, a decade before, built similar communities in Wayne, a Main Line town 9.4 miles west of Overbrook. The selection of Overbrook Farms' location was no accident; the new community's proximity to the station was essential for its success, as it was in Wayne.

A long, ornate canopy masks the trackside (north) façade of the station, but adds great depth and interest to the station as a whole (see fig. 2.5). This canopy is not original to the building, but its design is unique, made up of several massive support brackets that emanate from the building. The roof curves gently over massive turned columns attached to similar large brackets.

Across the tracks stands the Main Line's oldest outbound shelter (see fig. 2.6). The curve of its roof mimics the canopy across the tracks, but its architectural details are much more ornate. This indicates that it dates from probably the 1870s, a decade when more details were making

their way into Pennsylvania Railroad architecture. Its design is a close relative of the shelter at the 1870-era Ardmore Station, with identical columns, roofline and details (see fig. 2.86). The shelter at Overbrook is notable for its curved gateways which lead to the station's north parking lot. Despite being crowded by modern electrical boxes and unattractive standard-issue lighting, the shelter is remarkably well-kept following its 1999-2003 renovation.

Today's beautiful Overbrook Station looks much as it did in the late 19th century, but not thanks to consistent upkeep. In 1992, the station was in such disrepair that thousands of signatures from local residents were gathered to lobby SEPTA to repair the building. An Overbrook resident discovered federal grants for transit enhancements, and secured the support of local politicians. However, the application vastly underestimated the cost and time frame of Overbrook's renovation, at \$1 million to be completed by December 1995. In 2000, and \$6.3 million later, the project was thought to be nearly finished.¹ Delays followed, and the project was finally complete in October, 2003, at a final cost of \$9,101,649.² The consulting architect on the project was DPK&A Architects, now a subsidiary of transportation contractor TranSystems. The architects referred to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards; though not on the National Register, Overbrook Station is on the Pennsylvania Register of Historic Places.

Today, Overbrook Station stands as a good example of how SEPTA can properly renovate the historic structures it uses. Thankfully, SEPTA-standard paint colors and materials were overlooked in favor of historically accurate treatments. New paint colors included tans and very dark greens. Metal roofs were installed on all roofs and canopies, including a standing-seam

¹ Panaritis, Maria. "The Little Train Station That Could." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 12, 2000, B1.

² "SEPTA Capital Improvements in the City of Philadelphia, December 2008." <http://www.septa.org/reports/pdf/phila12-08.pdf>

metal roof on the station itself. A large sycamore tree, present in an 1890s photograph of the station, still stands behind the station, hinting at the rural atmosphere of Overbrook's early years.

The Overbrook Station site still has a preservation obstacle to overcome. Its switch tower, built in 1926³ and still in use, is crumbling (see fig. 2.7). Although much newer than the two other structures at Overbrook, the switch tower is the last Pennsylvania Railroad tower of its design on the Main Line, and the last one of any design still in use on the line. It retains its brickwork, oriel window and even original slate roof. Amtrak and/or SEPTA are obligated to the tower's upkeep because it is still in use, but its condition is worrisome.

Ten years after its extensive renovation, Overbrook Station has retained its condition rather well. Considering its proximity to West Philadelphia and St. Joseph's University, its continued upkeep has thankfully deterred graffiti and general mischief.

³ Baer, Christopher T. "A General Chronology of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company Predecessors and Successors and its Historical Context." http://www.prrths.com/Hagley/PRR_hagley_intro.htm



OVERBROOK STATION.

Fig. 2.1: Overbrook Station, from a ca. 1874 engraving. (*Suburban Stations and Rural Homes on the Pennsylvania Railroad.*)

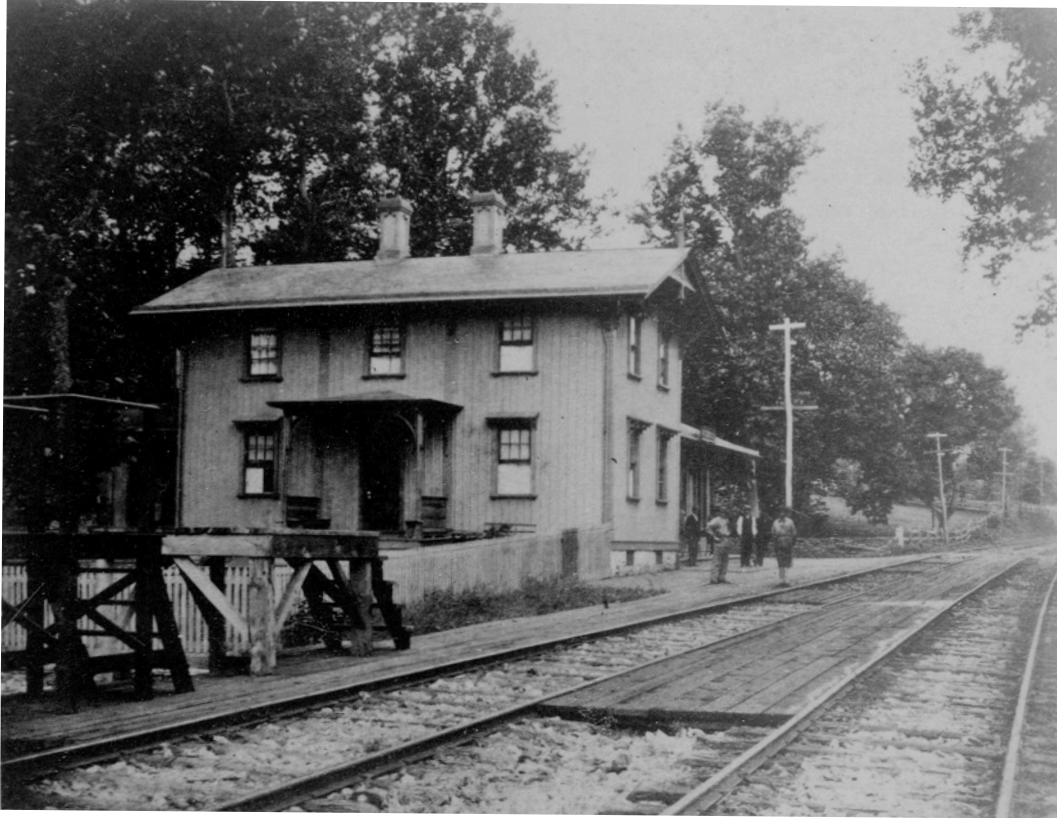


Fig. 2.2: The earliest known photograph of Overbrook Station. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.3: Overbrook Station 10 years after renovations. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.4: The sparsely painted interior of Overbrook Station. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.5: The roof canopy is supported by massive brackets. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.6: The outbound shelter's roof canopy curves gently, matching the roofline across the tracks. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.7: The Overbrook switch tower is in need of restoration. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



WHITE HALL STATION

One of the most historic and curious stations on the Main Line isn't even found on the current route. Before the railroad was straightened in the 1870s, it curved south past the White Hall Hotel, adjacent to where the Bryn Mawr Hospital would later be built. Only in service as a station for about ten years, the Italianate White Hall Station was built to accommodate hotel patrons around 1860. Although it has not been an active station for 140 years, it is included here because of its profound integrity and its uncommon representation of an early era in the railroad's history.

White Hall Station's only known contemporary on the Main Line is Overbrook Station. It is found on the original route of the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad, the precursor to the Pennsylvania Railroad built between 1828 and 1834. The Pennsylvania Railroad bought the P&C in 1857, giving the PRR a direct route between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh for the first time.

The old railroad ran at street-level along what is today Railroad Avenue and Glenbrook Avenue, crossing over today's "Five Points" intersection in Bryn Mawr. The White Hall Hotel stood across Bryn Mawr Avenue from the depot, and was probably the first suburban Main Line resort for Philadelphians wishing to vacation in the country. It was a large building abutting the railroad, painted white and encircled with porches. The hotel itself served as railroad stop until the freestanding White Hall Station was built. After the railroad was relocated to the north, the Hotel became a low-cost boarding house.

The P&C and other early railroads would often use existing buildings as railroad stops, so the Pennsylvania Railroad's construction of White Hall Station marks a turning point when the railroad began to build their own free-standing depots. The PRR's annual report of 1860 mentioned the construction of the 23' x 17' station, which was to be used as a passenger station, ticket office, and telegraph office.

In 1861, President Lincoln's inaugural train passed White Hall. More famously, his funeral train passed the station on its way to Springfield, Illinois, on Saturday, April 22, 1865. According to legend, the funeral train had to stop at White Hall to pick up ice and water, and some claim that the president's body laid in state inside the station at that time. There is no documentary evidence to support these long-told stories.

As part of their effort to straighten the right-of-way, the Pennsylvania Railroad built the Bryn Mawr cutoff in 1869-70, abandoning the old route and White Hall Station. In the early 1890s the building was used as a residence.¹ Some accounts claim that the station was bought by Bryn Mawr Hospital in 1893 for use as an isolation ward. The building must have changed hands shortly after, because in 1906, Bryn Mawr Hospital reportedly leased the old station from a different owner for a period of three years following a case of small pox.² As stated in the 13th annual report of the hospital,

a colored servant residing at Haverford, was, some days after admission, suspected to be small-pox, and the Hospital was promptly quarantined by the State Board of Health, which had been at once notified. Several consultations were held by the physicians of that Board, but it was nearly two weeks before they were able to positively pronounce that it was small-pox. In the meantime the Hospital was ordered to isolate the patient in some building away from the Hospital, and most fortunately your Trustees were able to secure, through the

¹ Berry, MD, Theodore J., ed., 13-14.

² Farrow, Barbara Alyce, 29-32.

kindness of the owner, the building opposite the Hospital, formerly the old Whitehall Station, which, being well isolated, met with the approval of the representatives of the State Board of Health...³

The Hospital first used the station as the Bryn Mawr Hospital Thrift Shop in 1929.

Today, the building retains many of its original features, including siding, decorative bargeboard and many original windows. It is possible that the stone wall emanating from the structure onto Glenbrook Ave. is also original. The most egregious alterations have been the enlargement of window openings and the addition of a second story fire escape that forced the enlargement of a window opening into an escape door.

The station's history is noted on a plaque mounted to the exterior wall. It reads that the building was constructed in 1860 and served as a station until 1926. It is unknown exactly to what the latter refers, as the railroad was re-aligned some 56 years before 1926.

The preservation of White Hall Station is owed to the fact that it has remained a relatively modest extension of a huge institution for the last 81 years. By serving as an administrative and storage annex to the thrift shop, it has not needed much in the way of alterations or interior reconfiguring.

³ *Thirteenth Annual Report of The Bryn Mawr Hospital, Bryn Mawr, Pa.*, 8-9.

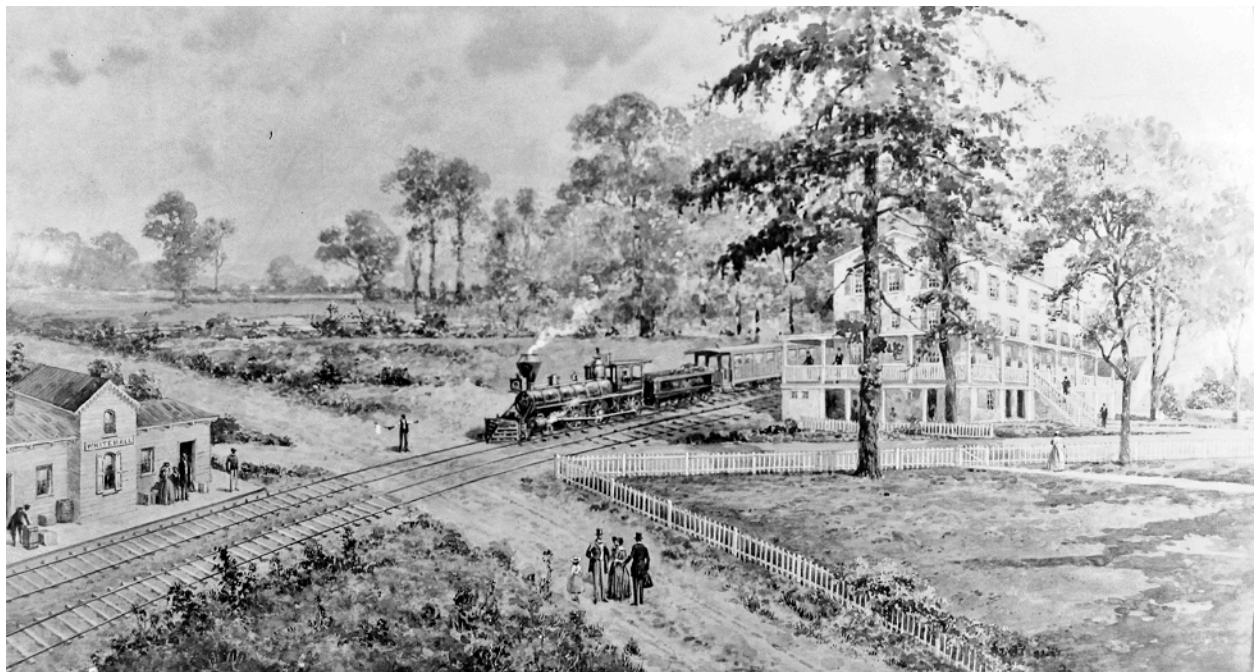


Fig. 2.8: Painting showing the railroad passing by the White Hall Hotel (right) and Station (left). Unknown date or artist. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.9: Stereo card by Purviance of Philadelphia showing the station in the 1860s. (Collection of the author)





ISOLATION WARD.

Fig. 2.10: Bryn Mawr Hospital photograph of the station as an isolation ward. (*Thirteenth Annual Report of The Bryn Mawr Hospital, Bryn Mawr, Pa.*)

Fig. 2.11: HABS photograph of the station, documented as HABS PA-577-1.





Fig. 2.12: White Hall Station in January, 2010, looking west. (Photo by the author, January 5, 2010)

Fig. 2.13: Unusual hardware such as this remains intact at White Hall, though its purpose is unclear. (Photo by the author, January 5, 2010)





Fig. 2.14: The interior of White Hall Station, now used as a thrift shop annex. (Photo by the author, January 5, 2010)

Fig. 2.15: These stone sleepers are found just outside the station, though on the opposite side of where they were originally located. They were originally used to hold Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad tracks in place. (Photo by the author, January 5, 2010)



WYNNEWOOD STATION

Wynnewood is a wealthy Lower Merion Township community, best known for the Lankenau Hospital, two historic religious seminaries, and a shopping district. Wynnewood borders Overbrook at City Avenue, though the railroad meanders north making two additional stops before Overbrook Station. Wynnewood is also known for its large estates, including that of the late Walter Annenberg (now the home of Philadelphia Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie). One of Wynnewood's most impressive mansions is Maybrook, built in 1881 within walking distance of Wynnewood Station. Resembling a castle from a fairy tale, its tallest tower is still visible from the passenger seat of a train just leaving Wynnewood Station. It can be seen for just a moment, the tower is perfectly in line with a path through the estate's wooded borders.

Wynnewood originally was known as "Libertyville." The original depot there was to the east of the current station, and the two stood concurrently for a short time (see fig. 2.18). Built in 1870, the new Wynnewood Station was designed by Pennsylvania Railroad architects Joseph M. Wilson and F. G. Thorn. The construction of the building cost the PRR \$6,219.33. The materials used included "irregular rubble masonry in Fairmount gneiss stone, with dark pointing, the door and window dressings being Ohio sandstone and green serpentine. The outside woodwork is stained and grained in oil to imitate oak, and the roof is covered with slate in three colors. The platforms around the building are of stone flagging."¹ While a similar amount of varied materials were used in the larger stations of the 1870s, it is notable that the PRR would choose to build such a small station with this amount of unusual materials.

¹ "Wynnewood Passenger Station, Pennsylvania Railroad." *Railroad Gazette*, January 25, 1873, 31.

Wynnewood Station acted as a prototype for several other Main Line stations: Haverford and Elm (later known as Narberth), both being a two-story variation; Strafford (originally located in Wayne) a wood frame variation; and Radnor, a brick variation with attached station agent's residence. Originally Wynnewood had no platform shelter, though one was attached to the station in the 1880s. The trackside façade of the station consists of three bays, the center having originally been an entrance. This bay was converted to a window, and two side façade window bays were converted to doorways. Each was converted with great attention to detail; only older photographs would tell that the windows and doors were ever anything different (see figs. 2.16 and 2.18). The sandstone sill of the trackside center bay (formerly the doorway) is stamped "B.M.," possibly suggesting that this element had once been in use at Bryn Mawr Station.

The outbound shelter at Wynnewood is a standard Pennsylvania Railroad shelter, with a decorative track-facing gable (see fig. 2.27). It remains in very good condition. Also present are the original brick platforms, laid in a herringbone pattern; SEPTA has paved over most other stations' brick platforms for easier plowing, yet Wynnewood's remain intact (see fig. 2.23).

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission deemed Wynnewood Station eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on November 8, 1991. It has not yet been listed, though it is listed on the Pennsylvania Register of Historic Places. The station has also been documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey.

The upkeep of Wynnewood Station is better than average, thanks in large part to the efforts of the Wynnewood Civic Association, which sees the building for what it is: a gateway to their community, where first impressions matter. Volunteers work not only to keep the station clean and in good condition, but to maintain the grounds surrounding the building. The

Association's volunteers have the support and help of SEPTA with this upkeep. In honor of a young Wynnewood Civic Association volunteer and board member who cared for the station and suddenly died in 2006, the Association set up the Tom Hays Jr. Memorial Fund for Train Station Maintenance and Beautification, and continues the station's maintenance in his honor.²

Wynnewood Station is one of the most historic on the Main Line, and stands as an example of how a community can rally around their station and ensure its future. Thanks in large part to the efforts of the Wynnewood Civic Association, the station will see many productive years ahead.

² Wynnewood Civic Association. "Train Station Committee." <http://www.wynnewoodcivic.com/pages/committees/train.htm>



SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1873.

Wynnewood Passenger Station, Pennsylvania Railroad.

This station was erected in 1870, at a point on the line of the Pennsylvania Railroad about 64 miles from Philadelphia, for the accommodation of a local business consisting principally of families who have their country seats in the neighborhood. The walls are constructed of irregular rubble masonry in Fairmount gneiss stone, with dark pointing, the door and window dressings being Ohio sandstone and green serpentine. The outside woodwork is stained and grained in oil to imitate oak, and the roof is covered with slate in three colors. The platforms around the building are of stone flagging.

The architects were Mr. Joseph M. Wilson, C. E., and Mr. F.

Contributions.

Changing a Curve for Different Tangents.

DALLAS, TEXAS, December 19, 1872.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RAILROAD GAZETTE:
In yours of December 7 is a curve problem proposed by "R. O. B.," of Albany, N. Y., dated November 26, 1872, to which I send the following solution, not original with me, but picked up some years ago in Van Nostrand's. Refer to his drawing.

$$FD + \frac{[FD^2 + FG^2 - 2R(FG)]^{1/2}}{(2R - FG)} = \text{tag. } \frac{1}{2} D R E, \text{ corresponding with the proposed extension.}$$

The double sign indicates that two different tangents from the same curve may pass through the given point.

In the RAILROAD GAZETTE, of June 24, 1871, is a solution for similar problem, by H. W. Lewis, Locating Engineer of the Kansas City, St. Joseph & Council Bluffs Railroad. And in a subsequent paper is another solution for same, by Col. Samuel

is for calculating cross-section areas of excavation or embankment.

$$(SC + W) \times \frac{L+R}{2} + C \times \frac{W}{2} = \text{area.}$$

which may be reduced to a shorter form and give a rule more easily remembered.

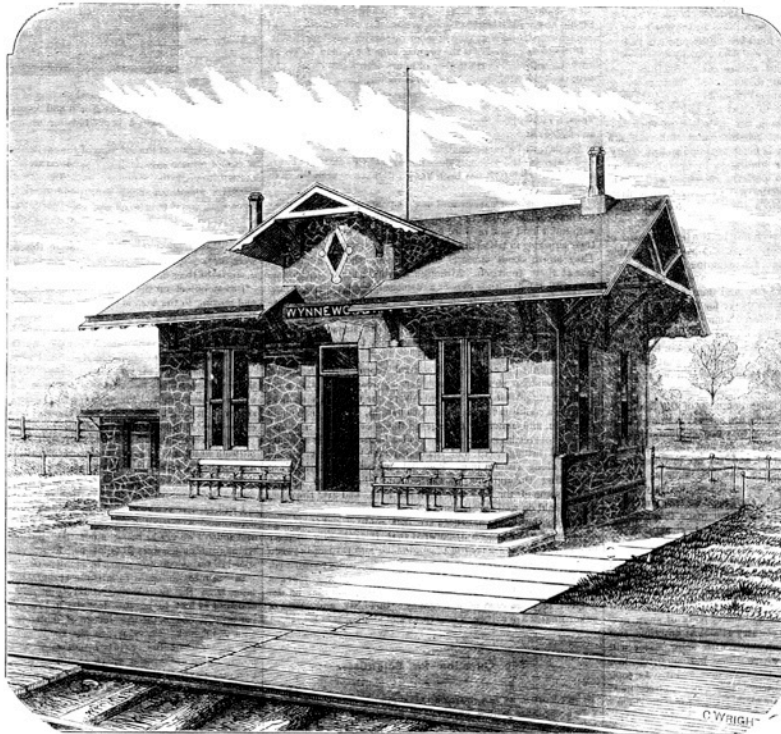
$$(SC + W) \frac{L+R}{4} + C \times \frac{W}{4} = \frac{C}{2} S(L+R) + \frac{L+2C+R}{4} \times W$$

$$= \frac{C}{2} [W + S(L+R)] + \frac{W}{4} (L+R) = \text{area.}$$

In the last formula it will be seen that $W + S(L+R)$ is the sum of the right and left distances out; from which we get the following rule for calculating areas:

To the product of one-fourth the width of road-bed by the sum of the side cuts or fills, add the product of one-half the center cut or fill by the sum of the side distances. W. L.

In the solution given by Mr. Conway R. Howard, published January 4, the statement was printed that where the given point falls outside of the tangent, "the formula is correct to within half a minute when $\frac{e}{d} = 0.15$." Mr. Howard writes to

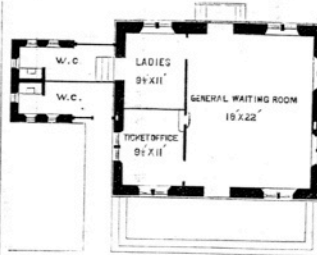


WYNNEWOOD PASSENGER STATION, PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD.

G. Thorn, and the structure was erected by the company. The actual cost for the building proper, not including grading and paving, amounted to \$6,219.33. Beautiful suburban towns are so often deformed by an ugly station—probably the one building most generally used by the inhabitants and the first to meet the eye of the visitor and give him an impression of the place—that it is pleasant to see so successful an attempt to make such a building beautiful as well as convenient.

Whiskey in the Cab.

The Altoona (Pa.) Tribune says:
"A few nights since the locomotive of a train on the Pennsylvania Railroad was run between Pittsburgh and Altoona by an engineer who had, unknowingly to the conductor, become considerably intoxicated in the former city. At times, at the most dangerous places, the man put the engine to its utmost test—forty-five and fifty miles an hour. But whenever he saw a red light he reversed the locomotive, and brought into operation the patent air-brake. The stoppages from Pittsburgh to Altoona on this account were very many, and the train was several hours late on arriving at the latter place. The peculiar movements of the train greatly excited the passengers and filled them with painful amazement. The conductor had become informed of the engineer's condition, but he could find no one to whom he could entrust the responsibility of running the train. He studiously kept his secret from the passengers, lest its divulgement would fill them with terror. Notwithstanding the dangerous hands in which probably a hundred lives had been placed, the train reached the end of the engineer's run with safety. It is needless to add that the drunken employee of the company was promptly discharged. He had previously been considered one of the best and most reliable engineers—as he was one of the oldest—on the road. On the day of the accident, unfortunately, he fell in with a party of friends, and drank an inordinate quantity of liquor."



W. Mifflin, of Columbia, Penn., a distinguished authority on railroad curves. While in Henck's "Handbook," page 59, problem 50, fig. 30, is still another.

W. M. J.

Calculating Areas of Cross Sections.

PHILADELPHIA, January 15, 1873.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE RAILROAD GAZETTE:
In the GAZETTE for December 21, "D. T.," in criticising "Hoosier's" paper No. 7, on Field Engineering, gives a formula

correct this, giving instead, "when it falls outside the formula is correct to within half a minute, up to a radius of 2,000 feet, when," etc.

Temporary Buildings—Hints for the Season—Treatment of Employees.

It is frequently a matter of economy to erect temporary buildings on new roads, such as water tanks, engine houses and the like, and this is practiced on most lines in this country to a greater or less extent—most generally the former. Some chief engineers seem to have a weakness for shammy, ill-looking temporary structures, and not only will they erect them where their use will be required for a brief period only, but they may be found in many places where it is intended at some future time to build a permanent structure. There are instances when it is difficult or perhaps impossible to obtain the necessary material for a permanent job when it is wanted, and a temporary affair becomes a necessity. But this necessity is usually the result of bad management. It is not a difficult affair for a chief engineer to determine at what time and place certain materials and appliances will be needed, and he can have them on hand in time to have the work thoroughly and substantially done. There are those, however, who have charge of the construction of new roads who never make any provision for anything until the moment it is needed. Then comes bustle and confusion. Something is scrambled together for material, and third-class workmen are set to using it, for no competent men have been engaged. If a water-tank is the work in hand, a rickety frame is sur-

Fig. 2.16: Page from the January 25, 1873 *Railroad Gazette* featuring Wynnewood Station. Below the engraving is the first floor plan of the station.



Fig. 2.17: The original station at Wynnewood (Libertyville) was the structure seen here looking east, ca. 1861. In the foreground, the tracks split off to a siding. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.18: The old station seen in the above image is in the background of this early view of the 1870 station. Besides the *Railroad Gazette* engraving, this is the only image of Wynnewood Station in its original configuration. (Courtesy of Ted Xaras)





Fig. 2.19: Wynnewood Station was inundated by a snowstorm in March, 1888. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.20: Looking northeast at Wynnewood Station in 1905. This detailed glass plate negative tells a great deal about the station's condition at the time. Waiting to the right of the building is a motorcar marked "Wynnewood Manor." (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.21: Following the route of President Lincoln's inaugural train, Senator Barack Obama made a whistle stop at Wynnewood Station, with Senator Bob Casey (left). (flickr user photonic fields, April 19, 2008)

Fig. 2.22: The south façade of Wynnewood Station in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.23: Looking west from the inbound platform. The PRR brick platform pavers are still in use. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.24: The station as seen looking southwest from the outbound platform. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.25: Looking northwest from the south parking lot. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.26: Detail of canopy roof end adjoining the west façade. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.27: The outbound shelter is a typical PRR standard design, and is very well maintained. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.28: The outbound shelter has an enclosed area that even contains an historic bench. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



HAVERFORD STATION

Haverford Station was originally Haverford College Station, and was located on the old route of the Philadelphia & Columbia where the railroad met the Lancaster Turnpike. When the railroad was re-aligned in 1869-70 to eliminate the Bryn Mawr cutoff, a new Haverford College Station was built at the east end of the new route. This new stone depot was similar in design to Elm (Narberth) Station, three stops to the east. The architects were Joseph M. Wilson and Fred G. Thorn.

Haverford College, founded in 1833, was originally a Quaker institution. It is unknown if the site was chosen for its proximity to the new Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad, but its closeness undoubtedly made the college more accessible and visible for being in such a rural location. Haverford College students were given a pedestrian bridge over the railroad near the old Haverford College Station. A similar bridge still stands at this location on the foundations of the original bridge, across the old P&C route, now Railroad Avenue.

Like Elm, Haverford College Station was built with a first story projecting bay facing the tracks. Because of its close proximity to the rails, this bay had to be removed when two new tracks were added to the Main Line. The station's proximity to the tracks also allowed for its later attached platform canopy to be built to the east without drastically masking the building's façade. Significant changes came to the station in 1898, when an extension was added to the north side of the building (facing the driveway/parking lot). The plans for this addition were

drafted in 1895 by Joseph T. Richards, but were not executed until three years later, by builders C.R. Kohl and Bros.¹

Haverford Station (the “College” was removed from its name sometime around 1900) has the unique distinction of having a substantial structure on either side of the tracks. In 1916, a rectangular-plan station and post office building was built on the south side of the tracks (see fig. 2.42). The 1870 station remained, and the ca. 1880s-‘90s inbound shelter was left to connect with the new building. The PRR’s reasons for continuously building new structures at Haverford while demolishing nothing is a bit perplexing; it seems likely that passengers wanted a station on the inbound side, and the old station was simply too massive to remove.

Perhaps in favor of the new inbound station, the 1870 station fell into disrepair. A fire in the 1970s engulfed the building in flames (see figs. 2.35, 2.36). As of 2011, the building is largely abandoned, although an antiques/collectables store called Chelsea House, Ltd. has operated in the 1898 ground floor addition since at least the early 1990s.² The 1916 inbound station remains the primary station at Haverford. Its ground floor contains a Prudential Fox & Roach real estate office, while a ticket office operates at track level.

After the fire, the 1870 station received some modifications, but now sits unused. The building presents an opportunity for Amtrak/SEPTA; the station is centrally located near Haverford College, a successful commercial district and high-end residential neighborhoods. With restoration, the presently unused portions of Haverford Station could be a valuable rental space.

¹ Blueprints of these changes are found at the Athenæum of Philadelphia. The construction contract is in the PRR archive at the Hagley Museum and Library.

² O’Neill, Robert F. “Old Train Stations on Right Track.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 22, 1993.



Fig. 2.29: Haverford College Station in the 1870s. (From west2k.com, retrieved April 1, 2011)

Fig. 2.30: Lithograph made from the above photograph. Appeared as part of the frontispiece of *Pennsylvania Railroad Scenery*, published 1890. (Athenaeum of Philadelphia)



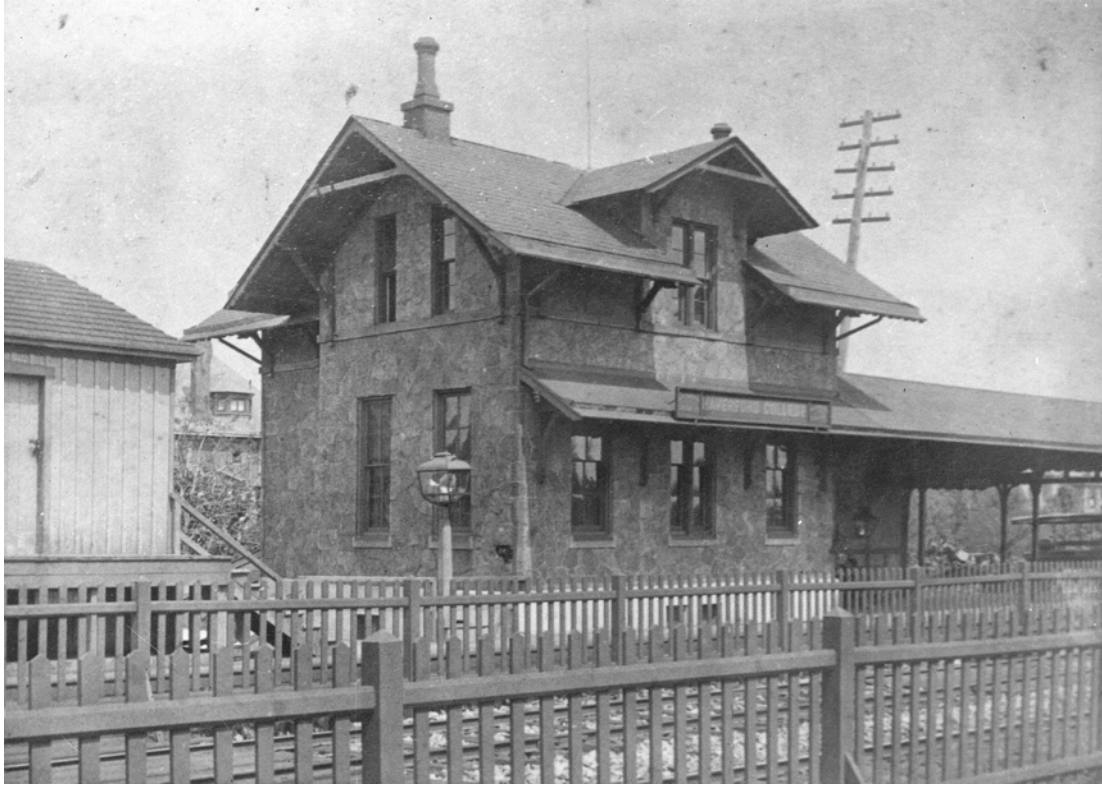


Fig. 2.31: Haverford College Station, following the removal of its front protruding bay and the addition of its extended platform canopy. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.32: A ca. 1891 photograph probably by William Rau, looking east towards Haverford College Station. (From *On the Main Line*)





Fig. 2.33: An MP54 passes Haverford Station, prior to its fire. (Photo by Jeffrey W. Prichard, 1971)

Fig. 2.34: A Silverliner passes the outbound platform in this 1974 view looking west. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.35, 2.36: Haverford Station suffered a massive fire in the 1970s. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.37: After the fire, the station's windows were covered, but eventually replaced. (Lower Merion Historical Society)



Fig. 2.38: This photograph from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* of May 4, 1980, shows the deplorable condition of the station's underground tunnel. The tunnel is one of the oldest on the Main Line. The newspaper caption read, "Joyce York would like to see the Haverford train station repaired and placed on the National Register of Historic Places." As of 2011, the tunnel looks much as it did in 1980. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission deemed Haverford Station eligible for the National Register in 1982, but it has yet to be listed. (Temple University Urban Archives)



Fig. 2.39: The 1870 Haverford Station, looking north from the inbound platform in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.40: The rear of the building, showing the 1898 addition, in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.41: Looking east from the outbound platform. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.42: The inbound shelter and station, looking southeast from the outbound platform. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



NARBERTH STATION

The station known as Narberth was originally called “Elm,” a stop along the old West Philadelphia Railroad route. In 1870, the Pennsylvania Railroad built Elm Station along the same plans as Haverford College Station, designed by Joseph M. Wilson and Fred G. Thorn. Unlike Haverford College and Wynnewood, two other 1870 stations, Elm did not have a town or local landmark from which to draw passengers. The nearest settlements were Libertyville, some distance to the north, and Merionville to the northeast, which included the General Wayne Inn and Merion Friends Meeting House. Elm was simply a spot between Merion and Wynnewood, and perhaps the PRR wanted to promote the growth of a development there.

Elm Station continued to lack surrounding construction until the 1876 Centennial Exposition came to Philadelphia, when it was chosen as the site of a large temporary structure, the Centennial Encampment of the Patrons of Husbandry (see fig. 2.45). Elm was easily accessible by rail from the Exposition, just three or four miles away, and had ample land for such a large structure. Built south of the station, it was called the “largest Summer Hotel building in the world,” with 1,200 rooms and housing for 4,000 guests. It had a large dining room with seating for 1,000. Western Union Telegraph offices, Adams Express, PRR ticket agents and a U.S. post office were all available on site.¹

Amidst the excitement of the Centennial in 1876, Elm Station saw two major tragedies. Sometime around October 17, Max Hoehne, a young German, was murdered near the Granger Encampment. Some Philadelphia boys were walking along the railroad the following February

¹ “A Gigantic Centennial Hotel.” *Scientific American Supplement* No. 30, July 22, 1876.

and found Hoehne's hand sticking out of a pile of rubbish. He had come to the country looking for opportunity, and was murdered by another German, Heinrich Wahlen, who then attempted to extort money from Hoehne's parents in Germany. The sensational case was called "The Centennial Murder" by the *New York Times*.² The second tragedy was the loss of the Grangers' Encampment by fire. Early in the evening of November 17, 1876, the building burned and the fire was visible all the way from the city. The loss was \$80,000.³ The enormous building was only in use for a few months, and was not re-built. It is unknown what became of the site, though an 1881 atlas suggests that the area was later occupied by various large estates.⁴

Eventually, the town of Narberth (another Welsh name) grew around around the station, and was incorporated in 1895. A community with a unique personality and flavor, Narberth is an independent borough completely enclosed by Lower Merion Township.

The PRR built platform canopies on either side of the tracks at Narberth in the 1880s-'90s. The outbound canopy, on the side of the station building, greatly obscured the building, yet the nearly identical Haverford Station received much less intrusive canopy additions. Narberth Station became an unsightly structure, at least from the track side. The railroad demolished it in 1967, and a brick office building called One Station Circle was put in its place (see fig. 2.52). The inbound shelter stood another twelve years; on August 14, 1979 a photograph of the shelter was published in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* with the caption "SEPTA is planning to replace the old platform shed on the 'inbound' side of Narberth station." On this site today is a simple metal and glass structure with a ticket office; though the original

² "The Centennial Murder." *New York Times*, September 10, 1877.

³ "Fire Near Philadelphia." *New York Times*, November 18, 1876.

⁴ *Bryn Mawr and Vicinity. Atlas of Properties Along the Pennsylvania Railroad from City Line to Malvern Station*, plates 2, 6.

station was on the outbound side, the inbound shelter now logically acts as the official railroad station, while the office building on the site of the original depot has no relation to railroad operations.

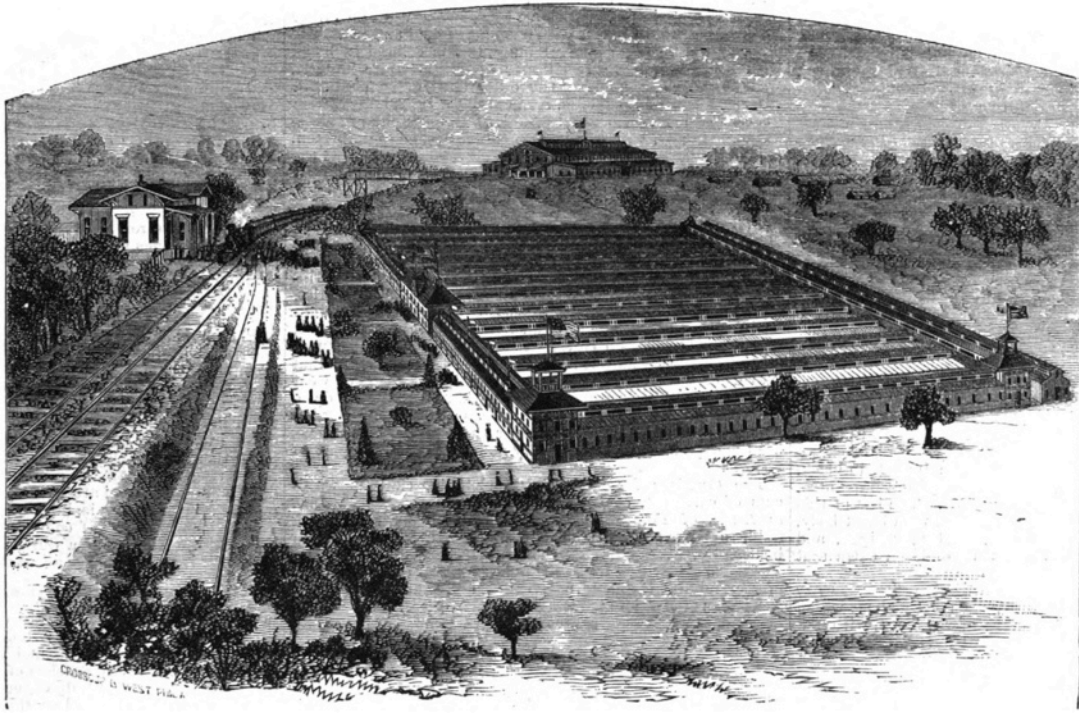
Though the original 1870 station no longer stands, the stop at Narberth is not without historic features. On the outbound side, brick pavers still line the platform, set in a herringbone pattern (see fig. 2.52). An historic hairpin fence still lines the platform above the north parking lot. Amazingly, attached to the ca. 1960s outbound roof canopy are two of the oldest still-used station signs on the entire Main Line (see fig. 2.53). These signs closely match the original ca. 1900 PRR stations signs in shape and lettering, though these are made of plywood and painted in the blue and white Penn Central colors. The fact that they have survived for so long is remarkable, although they are badly weathered.



Fig. 2.43: Elm Station, looking west from the north platform, before 1879. (Courtesy of Ted Xaras)

Fig. 2.44: A very old circular photograph of Elm Station, looking north from the inbound platform. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION.—HOTEL OF THE PATRONS OF HUSBANDRY.

Fig. 2.45: Elm Station (left), overlooking the hotel built south of the tracks for the Centennial Exposition. The scale and architecture might be exaggerated here in a collage-like fashion, as the Centennial building in the background appears much closer than it actually was. (*Scientific American Supplement*, July 22, 1876)
 Fig. 2.46: Looking west at Narberth Station from an overhead bridge. Two switch towers are visible here: the far tower was an older octagonal one, and the near tower was a more spacious one, still under construction when this photograph was taken, ca. 1890-1900. (Lower Merion Historical Society)



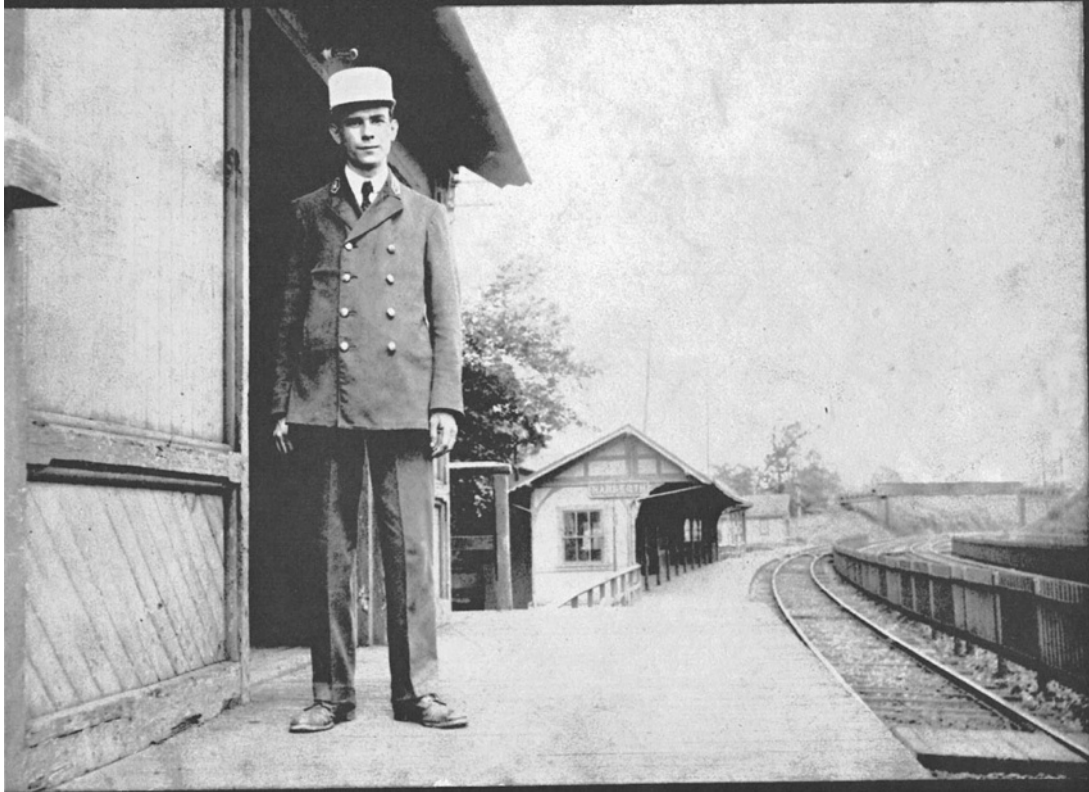


Fig. 2.47: A railroad employee stands at the door of Narberth's freight house in the early 20th century. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.48: A mid-20th century postcard of Narberth Station. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.49, 2.50: Narberth Station awaits its demolition in the 1960s. These photos were taken from Haverford Avenue, and show how the station's elevation created a disconnect with the later downtown commercial district. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.51: View of the Narberth inbound shelter, showing the scale of its disrepair in the 1970s. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.52: The One Station Square office building now stands where the original Elm/Narberth Station stood. Still intact is the brick outbound platform. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.53: This Penn Central-era wood sign at Narberth Station is, along with another at the opposite end of the canopy, the oldest station sign still in use on the Main Line. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



BRYN MAWR STATION

The Pennsylvania Railroad's showpiece on the Main Line, Bryn Mawr Station was the grandest, most photographed, and most heavily marketed station in suburban Philadelphia. A replacement of White Hall Station on the so-called Bryn Mawr cutoff realignment project, Bryn Mawr was not only a station to the PRR, but also a resort spot and a real estate opportunity. The railroad erected the Bryn Mawr Hotel (aka the Keystone Hotel) north of the station, a convenient country getaway for Philadelphia residents.¹ The PRR also established the town of Bryn Mawr, an ideal commuter suburb with the railroad as its backbone.

The gateway to this new utopia was Bryn Mawr Station. Built ca. 1869-70 from a design by Joseph M. Wilson and Frederick G. Thorn, the station was contemporary with other Wilson/Thorn stations to the east, such as Wynnewood, Elm and Haverford. Bryn Mawr's stonework would resemble the others, but its footprint equalled about three times that of its neighbors. The massive station was set atop a hill, from which passengers had to walk down ten stairs to reach the tracks. "Cobweb" masonry effects were used impressively, with stone window sills and lintels. Patterned slate covered the roof, and highly decorative metal finials rose from every gable. A large trackside porch was a harbinger of the large platform canopies soon to be found at all stations. A pointed depressed arch was an architectural theme reflected throughout Bryn Mawr Station inside and out.

This type of arch was even found supporting part of the pedestrian footbridge that crossed the tracks just west of the station (see fig. 2.56-2.61). This impressive, finely detailed structure

¹ The Bryn Mawr Hotel is a significant topic by itself. It was subject of a thesis by Alison Janet Reed entitled "The Bryn Mawr Hotel: The Relationship Between the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad and the Nineteenth-Century Railroad Resort Hotel," University of Pennsylvania, 1989.

was part of what made Bryn Mawr such a photogenic stop. Globular gas lights were found at either end of the span, and the columns and railings were designed to match the station's architecture. While many stations were photographed from their nearby bridges, there are more photographs of Bryn Mawr that include the bridge as an essential part of the overall picture.

During the station's early days, an outbound shelter (perhaps the first on the Main Line) was erected north of the tracks. This structure was very tall, fashioned of stone like the station, and capped with a towering cupola (see fig. 2.56). Shortly after the station was completed, a large freight depot was built to the station's east, a stone building designed by Wilson and Thorn to perfectly complement the depot (see fig. 2.70, 2.71). The entire group of structures made for an architectural spectacle deliberately designed to impress visitors.

With success came change. A third track was added between Philadelphia and Bryn Mawr in 1873, necessitating a loading platform at the western end that obscured the view of the station from the east (see fig. 2.61). By the end of the decade, four tracks were installed through the Main Line. When this change occurred, the old pedestrian bridge was too narrow to accommodate the new trackage. The bridge was rebuilt and enlarged, and for some reason relocated to the east of the station building (see fig. 2.62). A switch tower was erected about where the pedestrian bridge set down on the north side of the tracks.

Around 1900, further changes were made to the station. The building's architecture was altered so that the first floor was level with the platform. This involved lengthening doorways below what had been grade, and presumably altering the depot's first floor. Because of these changes, former attic space in the station's east wing became usable, and larger windows were installed to create a full second floor. A new brick and frame signal tower was built on the site of

the old tower (see fig. 2.72, 2.73), and the pedestrian bridge was removed in favor of an undergrade tunnel. The station's trackside porch roof remained, and overlapped with a new metal platform canopy. A similar canopy was built on the outbound side. A deviation from the PRR's previous standard canopies in both materials and aesthetics, the Main Line had never seen this kind of shelter at a station (see fig. 2.67). Their corrugated metal roofs make them appear to be temporary structures, though they outlived the station. Such a blatant lack of architectural harmony between the stone station and metal canopies demonstrates a disconnect from the PRR showplace of 1870. By 1900, Bryn Mawr was a well-established town with many wealthy residents, and the old Bryn Mawr Hotel (by then in its second incarnation) would be taken over completely by the Baldwin School in 1922.

With the evolution of Bryn Mawr from rural tourist mecca to ordinary commuter stop, the station was suddenly as ordinary as any other, with a large building that was now too much to maintain. The old detached freight house was abandoned, later to be subdivided and renovated as a restaurant, and the station itself deteriorated. On a small piece of land adjoining Bryn Mawr Station to the east, a new station structure was built (see fig. 2.75). The difference in scale between the old and new Bryn Mawr Stations is somewhat shocking; the new building is a simple, rectangular-plan brick building with Colonial Revival details. Its peaked roof and modest ornamentation was a drastic change from the cold modernism of Paoli and Ardmore's 1950s-era "upgrades," yet the new Bryn Mawr was an odd "improvement" over its predecessor. This change was especially evident when, for a short time, the two buildings stood side by side. The original Bryn Mawr Station was demolished in 1963. Fortunately, the Historic American Buildings Survey documented the station before its loss.

Despite the loss of the station, there is still a good amount of historic fabric remaining at Bryn Mawr. The old corrugated metal roofed platform canopies remarkably still shelter passengers from the rain, after 111 years of use. The old freight building has been modified heavily, but it still stands, today as the “Tango” restaurant (see fig. 2.71). Though much of its façade is obscured with additions, a few visible sections of stonework give diners a feeling of what it was like to be inside Bryn Mawr Station.

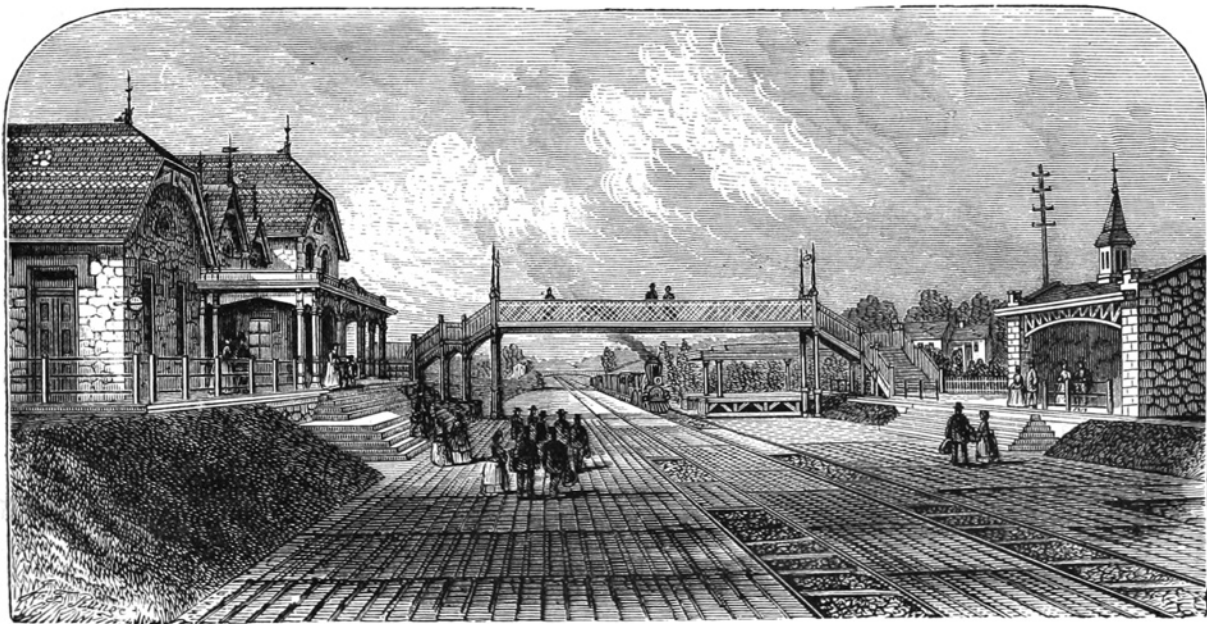
Bryn Mawr’s major preservation concern is that of the ca. 1900 switch tower, on the north side of the tracks west of the platform. The building is today unused by SEPTA or Amtrak, and so it sits and rapidly deteriorates. Its oriel window above the tracks, complete with curved glass, hangs from the second story, mostly boarded up. A remarkable structure and the last intact example of its kind on the Main Line,² the tower deserves more care.

² An identical tower is located west of Paoli, though its oriel window has been lost.



Fig. 2.54: This early photograph of Bryn Mawr Station was reproduced and included in the early 1960s HABS documentation of the station. (HABS # PA-1081)

Fig. 2.55: One of many early engravings of the station, used for various publicity purposes. (*Suburban Stations and Rural Homes on the Pennsylvania Railroad*, 22.)



BRYN MAWR STATION.



Fig. 2.56: A remarkable photograph by Robert Newell, looking west from the inbound platform. This image is so detailed that many architectural details are visible, as well as the globular gas lights over the pedestrian walkway. The bridge in the distance is likely North Merion Avenue. The edge of the outbound shelter is visible at extreme right. An ironwork sign reading "Bryn Mawr" is just visible on the edge of its roof. (Library Company of Philadelphia)

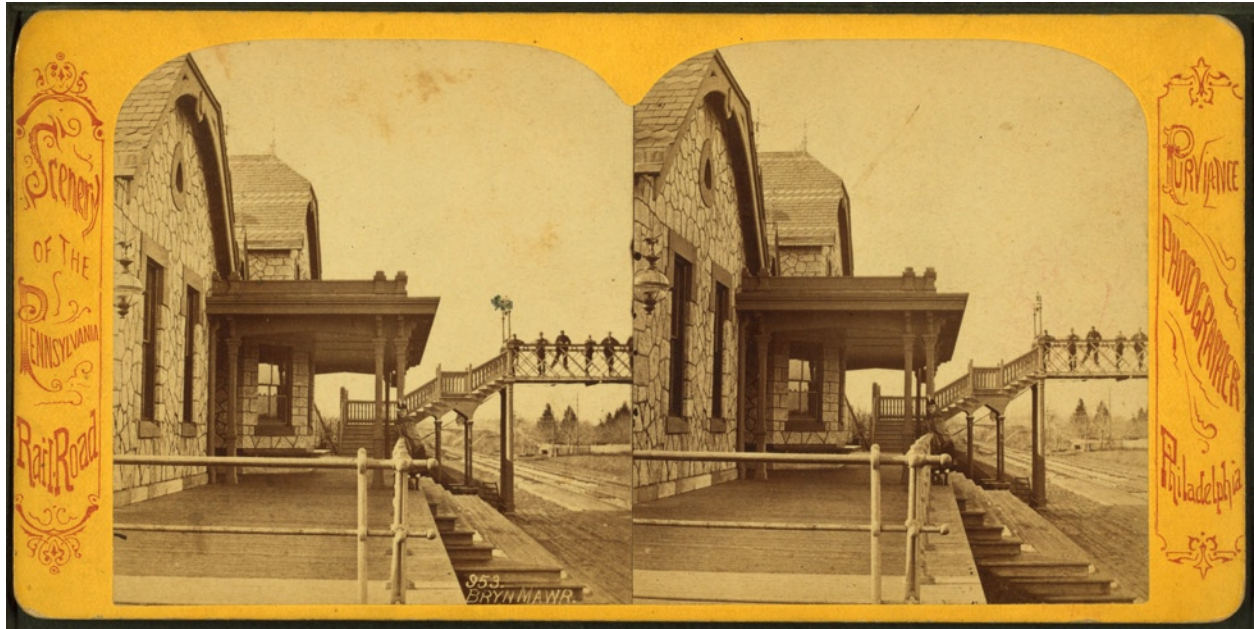


Fig. 2.57: A stereo card of Bryn Mawr Station, by William T. Purviance. (New York Public Library)

Fig. 2.58: Bryn Mawr played a prominent role in railroad advertising, even as the prominent image in this 1870s PRR brochure. (From *Philadelphia Railroads*, 20)



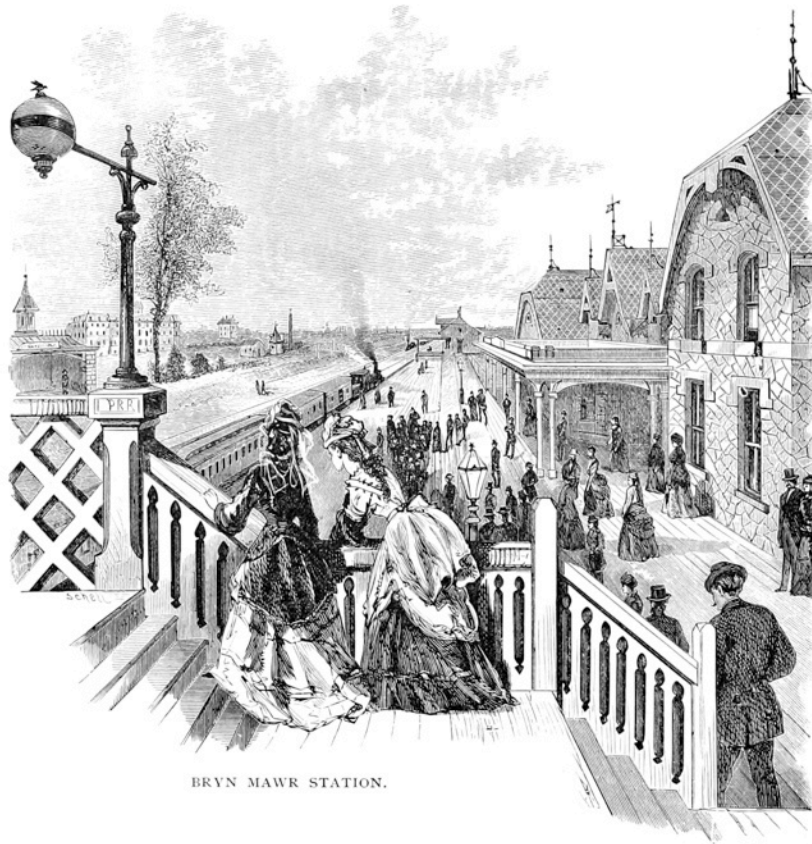


Fig. 2.59: An often reproduced 1870s engraving by F.E. Schell shows a bustling view of Bryn Mawr as seen from its pedestrian bridge. (*Summer Excursion Routes*, Pennsylvania Railroad Co., 1885)
 Fig. 2.60: View of the bridge showing the gas lights. (From *A Pictorial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad*, 103.)



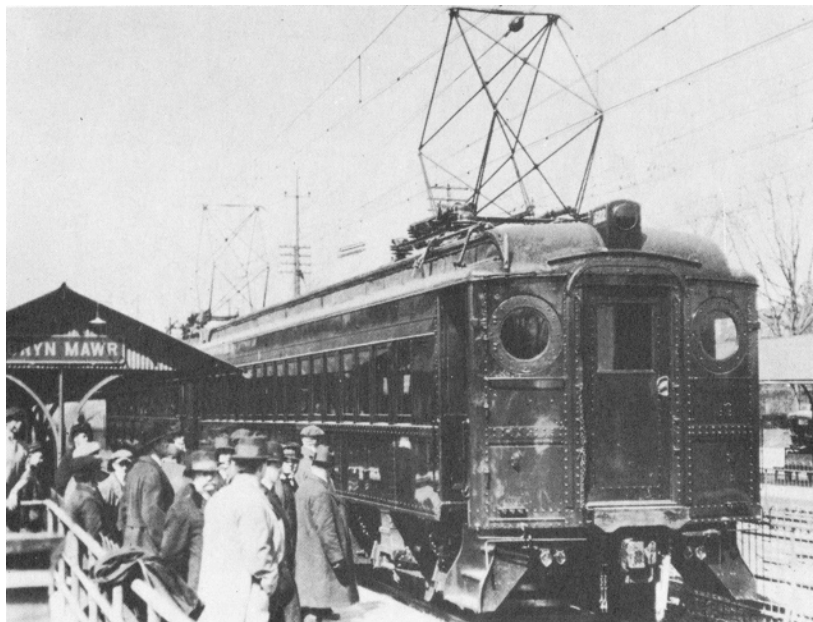
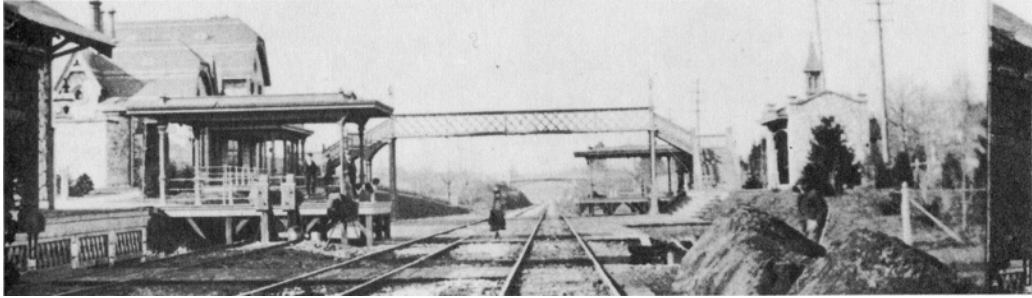


Fig. 2.61: Bryn Mawr after a third track was installed in 1873. (From *A Pictorial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad*, 103.)

Fig. 2.62: After the fourth track was installed, the pedestrian bridge was moved to the opposite side of the station. (From *On the Main Line*, 22.)

Fig. 2.63: A photograph allegedly of the first "M.U" electric train at Bryn Mawr, 1915. (From *A Pictorial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad*, 218.)



Fig. 2.64, Fig. 2.65: Two 1935 views of Bryn Mawr Station. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.66: A swarm of commuters board an MP54 at Bryn Mawr. This photograph appeared in the April 27, 1962 issue of the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*. (Temple University Urban Archives)

Fig. 2.67: HABS photo showing the 1870 station and ca. 1900 metal canopy. (HABS # PA-1081)





Fig. 2.68, 2.69: HABS photos of the rear (south façade) of the station, and the interior. The interior arch mimics arches originally found on the exterior and original pedestrian bridge. (HABS # PA-1081)





Fig. 2.70: Before renovations, the old freight station to the east of the passenger station appeared disheveled. Many of its details and materials mimicked those of the passenger station. (*From Triumph III*, 183.)

Fig. 2.71: The freight station today is largely obscured by uncharacteristic additions, but it stands as the oldest piece of railroad architecture at Bryn Mawr. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.72: In 1971, the switch tower at Bryn Mawr was a gleaming, freshly painted structure in good shape for being about 70 years old. Large windows encircled the entire second floor, atop a brick first story. (Photo by Jeffrey W. Prichard, 1971)

Fig. 2.73: Today, the tower retains its slate roof and terra cotta roof cresting, but it is badly in need of repair. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.74: Looking southwest from the north parking lot of Bryn Mawr Station. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.75: The ca. 1963 Bryn Mawr Station building, as seen looking north from across North Bryn Mawr Avenue. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



ARDMORE STATION

The town of Ardmore was originally known as Athensville, or sometimes just Athens. It was the point on the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad at which the tracks headed north to the Belmont Incline. When the West Philadelphia Railroad was put into use as the P&C's eastern end, the new route met with the old at the site of Ardmore Station. The first station at Athensville was a simple square-plan building that was typical throughout the Philadelphia & Columbia line and built by independent passenger train operators (see fig. 2.76). According to some scholars, this small building was moved west to Upton (a short-lived station between Villanova and Radnor) when the new Ardmore Station was built in 1872-3. The name Athensville was officially changed to Ardmore by the PRR Board on November 26, 1873.¹

The new station was built on the outbound side of the tracks, and the design was based on that of Bryn Mawr with some major differences. Besides obvious decorative changes, Ardmore had a gabled roof instead of hipped roof, it was built on an elevation necessitating a ground/basement floor, and its switch tower was integrated with the depot. It is the only depot on the Main Line to have this distinction. The second floor of the tower featured cross-timbering, while the rest of the building was stone. The town of Ardmore did not have as much of a tourist draw as Bryn Mawr, though the railroad spared no expense for the design and construction of the depot there. Ardmore Station was depicted in almost as many advertising materials as Bryn Mawr, as its south-facing façade and picturesque tower made for a more attractive picture.

¹ Baer, Chris. "PRR Chronology, 1873."

The station was described thoroughly in the March 30, 1877 issue of the *Railroad Gazette*, which also featured plans and a full-page drawing of the station (see fig. 2.78 and 2.79).

The full-page engraving and the accompanying plans represent an admirable specimen of railroad architecture by Messrs. Joseph M. Wilson and F. G. Thorn, of the firm of Wilson Brothers & Co., of Philadelphia.²

The building is at Ardmore, seven miles from Philadelphia, and is constructed of gneiss stone, rock face, with Ohio stone sills and lintels to the windows ornamented by the sand-blast process. The main waiting-room is on a level with the railroad tracks and is finished with an open timber roof. The basement and second floor are used as a residence for the station agent, and the second floor of the tower for telegraph office and for operating the block signals. The fall of the ground from the railroad is such that the basement, which is really on the other side of the building, is a first story and entirely above ground.³

The town of Ardmore had a thriving downtown business district, built along Lancaster Avenue. The community was known for two major landmarks, one industrial, the other commercial. The former was the Autocar factory, which operated from 1901 through 1953. One of the first manufacturers of automobiles and trucks, Autocar employed thousands and produced a great deal of vehicles for the United States military during World War II. The factory brought national attention to Ardmore, as large, brightly colored Autocar advertisements were found in such publications as *Life* magazine. Autocar's enormous complex took up 17 acres south of the railroad along Lancaster Avenue. After being purchased in 1953, the factory operations moved to Exton, Pa. The factory caught fire and burned to the ground in 1956 in a blaze that is still remembered and discussed by locals who flocked to watch the dramatic spectacle.

² Wilson Brothers & Co. was not yet incorporated when Ardmore Station was designed; however, it had been by the time the article was published. The publication of the article five years following the station's construction may have been an attempt by Wilson Bros. & Co. to earn business, having been incorporated for only a year at the time.

³ "Ardmore Station." *Railroad Gazette*, March 30, 1877, 144.

The second major development that changed Ardmore forever was Suburban Square. An early open-air shopping mall, this commercial haven boasted a movie theater, office building tower, and a branch of Philadelphia's venerable Strawbridge & Clothier department store, along with many smaller shops. Opened in 1931 as "Hestobeen Square" (renamed in 1936), Suburban Square was built on the site of an estate including an 1881 mansion.⁴ Although the south side of the PRR in Ardmore might have been called the "wrong side of the tracks" – with the Autocar factory and an outdated 19th century commercial district – the area north of the tracks was, starting in the 1920s with the inception of Suburban Square, the comparative "place to be." It remains as such today, with amenities including an Apple Store and Macy's (in the former Strawbridge & Clothier). Suburban Square immediately bordered the 1872-3 Ardmore Station, and this proximity eventually spelled doom for the old depot (see fig. 2.88).

One prominent magazine of the late 19th century included the Ardmore depot in a feature on suburban stations. The gist of the article was that small town depots did not have to sacrifice architecture despite their remote settings.

In many cases a 'penny wise but pound foolish' policy has been followed, in utilizing the cheapest material and poorest construction, producing what might be termed in politics a "mugwamp;" or the buildings as erected might justly be criticised as being 'Queen Anne' in front, and 'Mary Ann' in the rear...⁵

Ardmore Station's rear elevation did not lack design, yet it did produce an unappealing look inconsistent with the high-class retail development within sight (see fig. 2.89). The towering gray stone façade, constantly in shadow, bore down on the crisp, clean, Art Deco Suburban Square complex like an uncomfortable reminder of life 50 years past. Looking from the south,

⁴ *The First 300*, 126-127.

⁵ Gilbert, Bradford Lee. "Picturesque Suburban Railroad Stations." *Engineering Magazine*, December, 1891, 337.

Ardmore Station was an interesting, well-lit symbol of the PRR's dominance. From the lower ground of Suburban Square, it was a hulking gray eyesore. On March 22, 1957, the PRR announced the sale of the station to Suburban Square for \$200,000, allegedly to cut the railroad's property taxes.⁶ The shopping center demolished the old station and built a much lower, modern bank building. This newer structure was replaced in the 2000s with a multi-story office/retail building, at which time SEPTA built a new outbound shelter on the nearby outbound platform.

Following the sale, the PRR built a new station at Ardmore, most reminiscent of their modern tan-brick station at Paoli. It was placed on the inbound side, opposite the location of the old station (see fig. 2.91, 2.92). As Amtrak's only stop on the Main Line other than Paoli, Ardmore remains a busy station for more than just local commuter traffic. Passengers can board at Ardmore and continue without transfer to destinations such as New York City. For such a high-profile station, Ardmore currently lacks adequate passenger facilities.

Ardmore Station's current inadequacy has been seen as an opportunity by a local developer. Dranoff Properties has been attempting to earn funding for a massive new Ardmore Station complex. The enormous project would not only include a new passenger rail station, but also a five story residential building, eight story parking garage, various retail components, and a clock tower (see fig. 2.95, 2.96). The architecture of the proposed station complex is of brick and light stone/cement, and the station itself would be vaguely reminiscent of 19th century railroad stations, with many postmodern touches. This project would fundamentally transform Ardmore, and require eminent domain to acquire some properties. The Ardmore community has fought the development, and a large gap in funding has now put the project on hold.

⁶ Baer, Chris. "PRR Chronology, 1957."

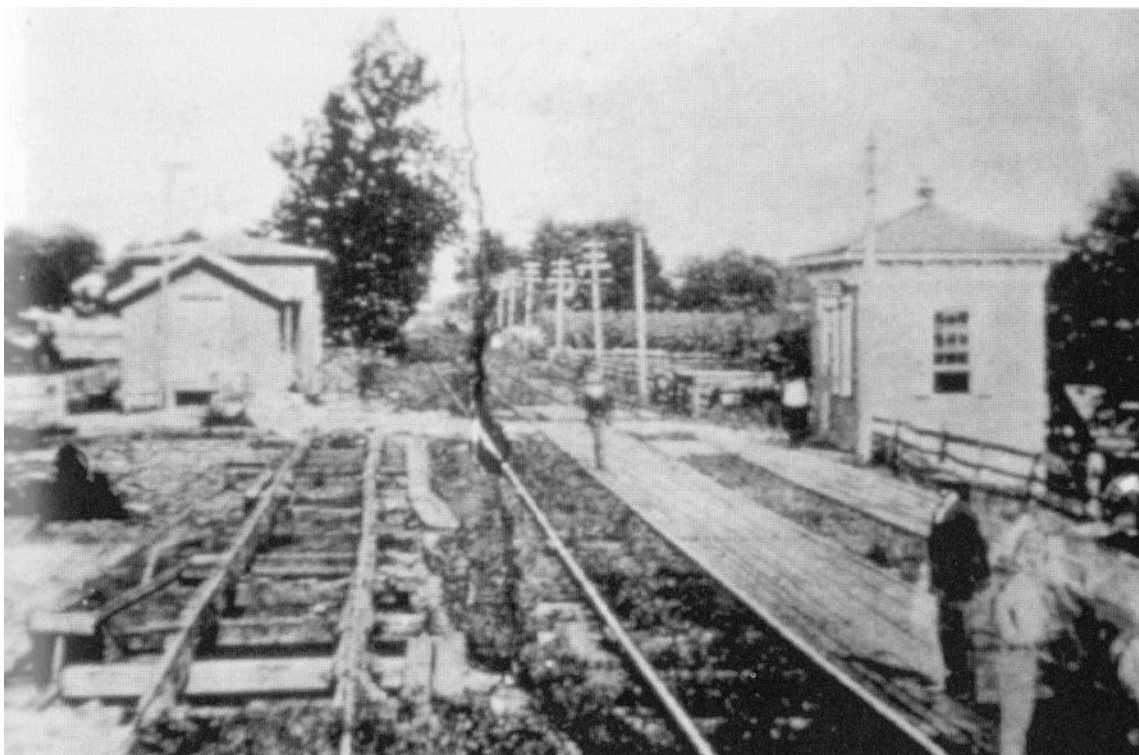


Fig. 2.76: A very rare early photograph of Athensville Station, the predecessor to Ardmore. The building on the right was a type of station used here and elsewhere on the P&C. (Courtesy of Ted Xaras)
 Fig. 2.77: An engraving of Ardmore Station as seen from the inbound platform. (From Sipes: *The Pennsylvania Railroad: Its Origin, Construction, Condition and Connections*, 80.)



ARDMORE STATION.



FRIDAY, MARCH 30, 1877.

Railroad Employes in France.

[Translated for the Railroad Gazette.]

In "Lectures on the Working of Railroads," delivered at the School of Bridges and Highways in 1867 by F. Jacquin, Manager of the Eastern Railroad of France, the following sections relate to the method of administration and the selection and treatment of employes:

Division and Organization of Service—Unity of Management.

The operation proper is subdivided into quite a large number of branches, concerning the relative importance of which knowledge did not exist at the time of the opening of railroads, and it was believed that it could be entrusted to officials independent of each other. On one side was put everything concerning the movement of trains, and the station service; on the other commercial operations were grouped. The accounts were divided, or entrusted to agents some of whom were occupied with the expenses, others with the receipts. It soon became evident that this division of service did more harm than good: the technical service did not carry out well the combinations planned by the commercial service, and on its part the latter did not take sufficient account of the means of action possessed by the technical service. Instead of lending each other mutual aid, the officers placed in the different ranks of the hierarchy often gave most thought to the discussion of questions of responsibility, and all the companies have come at last to recognize that, in order to attain the object of the operation, that is, to utilize the capital invested in construction, the first necessity is unity of management.

General Service.—The central service includes at least five grand divisions: the secretaryship and expenditure accounts, transportation, commercial agency, accounts of receipts or comptrollership, and claims. Some of these divisions may be subdivided, according to the organization adopted at the origin of the companies and the positions acquired by officers in every way worthy; but, we need not say, the number of the divisions is unimportant. We proceed to point out what exists on the Eastern Railroad.

The secretaryship includes the general correspondence, the distribution of parts, the working employes and expenses.

Having under its eyes, in a manner, everything concerning the employes, the chief of the operating service is assured of the unity which it is so indispensable to apply in the manner of dealing with the employes. By the direct and immediate control of the expenditures, he does not permit the undertaking of any operation which may, without its knowledge, compromise the interests of the company.

The transportation department directs the running of trains, watches over their safety, designates and keeps account of the train-men; it distributes the rolling stock according to the needs of the different stations, superintends everything which constitutes the transportation of small stores—the station furniture, tarpaulins, cordage, heating, lighting, telegraph, etc.

The commercial agency has for its principal task the securing of traffic, the preparation of tariffs, their harmonization with the bases fixed in

all the operations of the stations; their prompt settlement is one of the first duties of the operating management.

Active Service.—The active service includes the entire business of the stations and its superintendence. The question has been much discussed whether this superintendence could be exercised at Paris, or whether it should be delegated to local agents. Almost all the companies have adopted the system of delegated powers to superior local agents exercising at a distance the authority of the chief operating manager, but rendering account daily of the use made of this delegated power.

These superior agents have received the name of inspectors or principal agents of operation. The length of the divisions confided to them varies from 250 to 300 miles. Each division includes 50, 60, 80, and even 100 stations.

Detached Services.—The great systems sometimes comprehend sections of road which are isolated or in a peculiar situation. The division of the operating department—maintenance of way, rolling stock and transportation proper—would not be well realized on these isolated sections, where it would re-

could invoke in their favor nothing more than a series of failures in several careers fruitlessly attempted. The successive consolidations of the companies with each other created new difficulties, one of the advantages attributed to these consolidations was the diminution of general expenses; it was therefore impossible to maintain, at least in their old positions, a certain number of employes, and in all the companies it was necessary to plan the most varied combinations in order to utilize in the best manner possible the employes who were recommended by former service and a position certainly very interesting.

We have now emerged from this creative period: all the great systems are established, the consolidations planned have been accomplished, and each great company has arrived at an organization which may be considered final. In each of these organizations the functions are well defined, the employes are graded, and their rights are in a manner confirmed more and more daily.

Let a place with a salary of \$450 or \$600 fall vacant, and it will never enter into the mind of a head of department to propose to fill it with a person theretofore foreign to the company; that place is assured to an employee of the next lower grade. The certainty that the company reserves for its entire force all advancements in salary and position which are produced yearly appears to us to be one of the capital conditions of the organization of a great service.

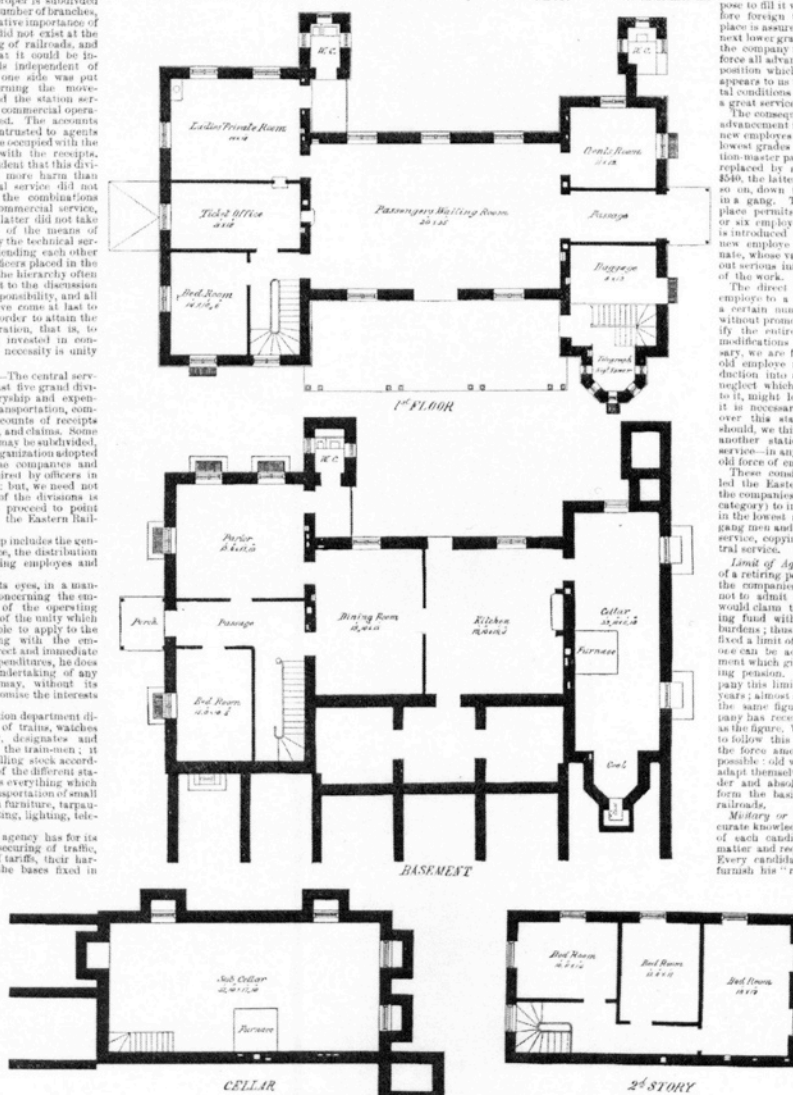
The consequence of this system of advancement is that the admission of new employes now occurs only in the lowest grades of the service. A station-master paid \$600 a year will be replaced by a station-master paid \$500, the latter by one paid \$450, and so on, down to a porter or laborer in a gang. The vacancy in a \$600 place permits the promotion of five or six employes, and, finally, no one is introduced into the company as a new employee except as a subordinate, whose value or fitness are without serious influence on the conduct of the work.

The direct nomination of a new employee to a \$600 place would leave a certain number of old employes without promotion, and might modify the entire service. That such modifications are sometimes necessary, we are far from denying. As a rule, old employes may permit the introduction into a station of habits of neglect which, if no heed were paid to it, might lead to disorder. Then it is necessary to put a new chief over this station; but this chief should, we think, be chosen either at another station or in the central service—in any case from among the old force of employes.

These considerations, then, have led the Eastern Company (and all the companies are now in the same category) to introduce new men only in the lowest ranks of the service—gang men and porters in the active service, copying clerks in the central service.

Limit of Age.—The establishment of a retiring pension fund imposes on the companies the strict obligation not to admit men already old, who would claim the benefit of the retiring fund without having borne its burdens; thus all the companies have fixed a limit of age beyond which no one can be admitted to an employment which gives a right to a retiring pension. In the Eastern Company this limit has been fixed at 35 years; almost all the companies have the same figures; the Orleans Company has recently adopted 32 years as the figure. We think it will be well to follow this example, and recruit the force among men as young as possible: old workmen with difficulty adapt themselves to the habits of order and absolute regularity which form the basis of the operation of railroads.

Military or Civil Service.—An accurate knowledge of the antecedents of each candidate is an important matter and requires great attention. Every candidate, therefore, should furnish his "record book," if he fol-



PLANS OF ARDMORE STATION, PHILADELPHIA RAILROAD.

the charters, the business correspondence and that with other railroad administrations, French and foreign.

The accounting of transportation receipts, often called the comptrollership, centralizes all the station accounts, verifies their operations, and establishes the accounts of the interchange traffic established by all the companies, so as to give the public the power to send from any French station freight addressed not merely to any other French station, but also to a considerable number of foreign stations. These accounts of interchange traffic require a considerable force; on the Eastern Railroad they necessitate the examination of 4,500 bills daily on the average.

Claims form the last and not least important branch of the central service; their number, their nature, their importance constitute a veritable comptrollership exercised by the public on

quire a considerable expense. In such cases it is better to concentrate all the branches of service in a single hand. We will cite as examples of these special organizations the Vincennes Railroad, in the Eastern system; the group of Belgians and Luxembourg lines worked by the Eastern Company; the road from Paris to Orsay, in the Orleans system.

Measures Taken for Recruiting the Force of Employes.—The question of recruiting the force of the employes in the operating departments has been for many years one of the greatest cares of the highest departments. The functions to be fulfilled were ill defined, the simultaneous opening of long sections rendered necessary the admission of a considerable number of new employees; finally, every one supposed to have any influence whatever in the choice of employees was besieged with solicitations in favor of candidates who had no qualifications, and who

lows a calling in which the "record book" is required, or a series of certificates delivered by the heads of establishments under whose orders he has been employed down to the time of his application.

For military candidates the certificate of good conduct is an indispensable document; if a former soldier cannot furnish this document, it may be concluded that his conduct in his corps has been reprehensible.

The admission of military candidates is obligatory on the companies. Article 65 of the general charter (*cahier des charges*) is as follows:

"A public administrative regulation will determine, the company having been heard, the positions of which one-half shall be reserved for discharged soldiers and sailors. This regulation has not yet been promulgated; moreover, it

Fig. 2.78: Plans of Ardmore Station as published in the *Railroad Gazette* of March 30, 1877.

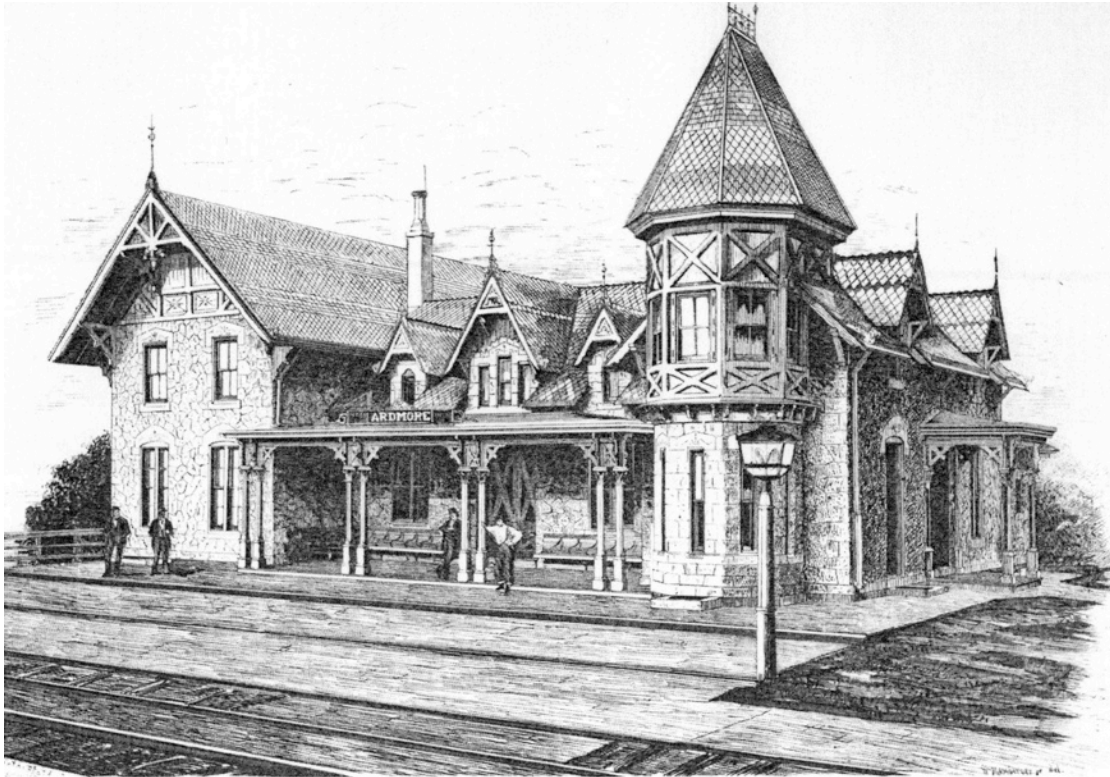


Fig. 2.79: An engraving of Ardmore Station was published as a plate in the same issue of the *Railroad Gazette*.

Fig. 2.80: The photo which inspired the above engraving. The artist took a few liberties, including removing the ladder from in front of the gas light. (From Wilson Bros. & Co. *Catalogue of Work Executed*.)





Fig. 2.81: A glass plate negative of Ardmore Station, ca. 1890. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.82: A drawing of Ardmore Station was used as the background for this advertising postcard. Stadelman's Pharmacy is advertised as "Directly opposite Station." (Lower Merion Historical Society, ca. 1882)

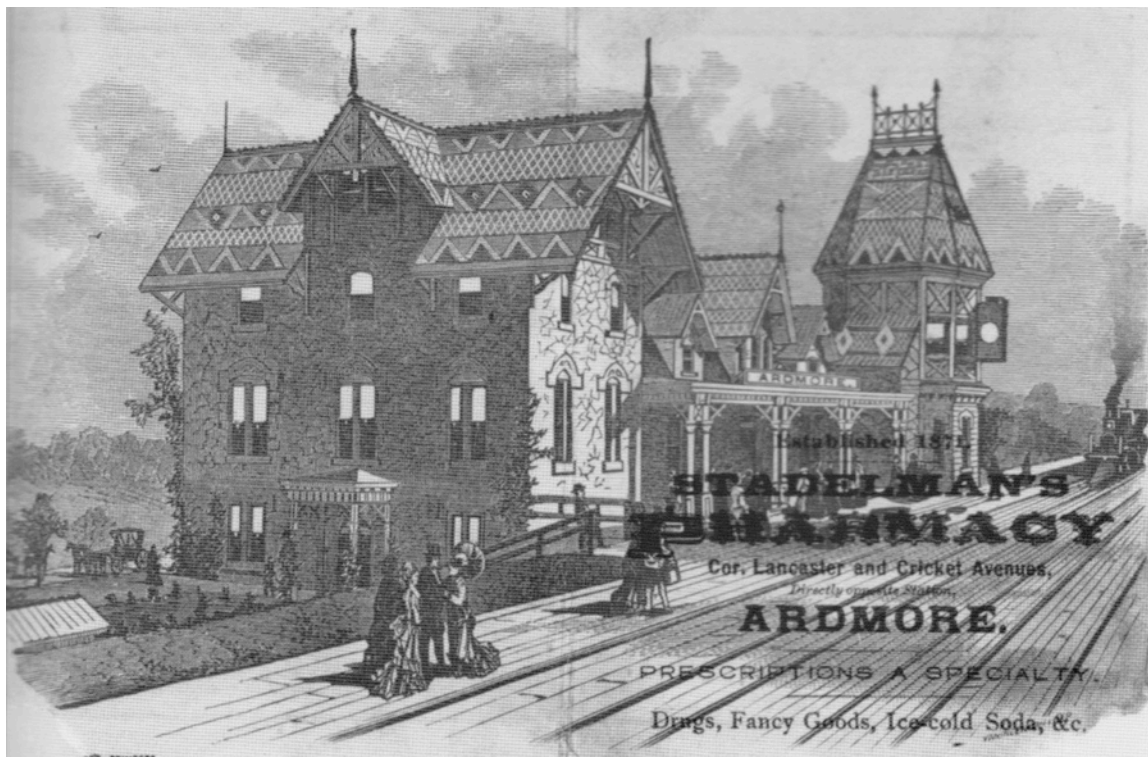




Fig. 2.83, 2.84: Two postcards of Ardmore Station. Above, a view from the outbound platform looking west, photographed by Lucy Sampson. Below, a view looking northeast from the inbound platform published by Phillip H. Moore. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.85: A long outbound canopy was built onto Ardmore Station, as was the custom in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. (Courtesy of Ted Xaras, ca. 1917)

Fig. 2.86: The inbound platform canopy had details typical of 1870s stations. The columns and sloping roofs shows that this canopy was similar to Overbrook's outbound canopy. (Lower Merion Historical Society, ca. 1940s)





Fig. 2.87: Ardmore's freight station is the last frame freight building on the Main Line. The building grew in size over time, and is now used as a storage building for Trader Joe's of Suburban Square. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.88: Ardmore gained prominence with the development of Suburban Square, seen here in a 1940 aerial view. The station, seen at the right center of this photograph, was not very complementary to the modern Art Deco architecture of the shopping center. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.89, 2.90: These views show Ardmore Station from below, looking up from Coulter Avenue (above) and Anderson Avenue (below). This side of the station was dark and not as attractive as the track side.
(Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.91: A Philadelphia *Evening Bulletin* photograph of passengers boarding a train at Ardmore, 1977. Despite the modern station, several historic PRR relics are still visible: the brick platform, hairpin fence, and cast iron station sign all predate the station by at least 50 years. (Temple University Urban Archives)



Fig. 2.92: The 1950s Ardmore Station as seen in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



Fig. 2.93: The interior waiting room of Ardmore Station is all the shelter that inbound passengers currently receive. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.94: The inbound platform, looking east. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.95, 2.96: Renderings show Dranoff Properties' design for the new Ardmore Station complex. The site is to include a station, residences, retail, and parking garage. As of May, 2011, the project is on hold due to a funding gap. (Renderings from dranoffproperties.com and mainlinemedianews.com)



STRAFFORD STATION

No other Main Line railroad station is as complex as Strafford, in terms of history, architecture, and mythology. It is the only building to have served as two separate stations on the Main Line, and to have been known by three different names.

The story of Strafford Station actually begins in Wayne. The first station at Wayne, a two-story Italianate building that housed the ticket agent's family, proved inadequate as a passenger station as the town grew. It was situated within the new and growing community of Louella, then at the beginning of its life as a planned suburban town. J. Henry Askin, whose mansion was also called "Louella," built a group of Second Empire-style homes along a tree-lined street, mimicking the style of his own home. Askin also built a Presbyterian Church, Lyceum Hall and town hall to serve his burgeoning community.

The Pennsylvania Railroad's answer to this growth in Louella was a small, two room passenger station modeled after Wynnewood Station, built ca. 1873.¹ The design of the building was also similar to Elm and Haverford, though like Wynnewood, the new building at Wayne was built on flat land. Those older stations to the east were built of stone in complex, "cobweb" masonry patterns. Wayne's new station was built of wood frame, but its architecture was no less complex than its cousins. In fact, the craftsmen who created the details for this station made it the most visually complex it could be (see fig. 2.99).

¹ Baer, Chris. "PRR Chronology, 1873." This chronology states that the 1873 PRR annual report mentioned the construction of a station at Wayne. Given the design similarities with the 1870 Wynnewood Station, the post-1873 PRR construction dry period on the Main Line and other indications, it seems probable that this is referring to the building that would become Strafford Station. If this dating is correct, the station stood in Wayne for just over a decade before being moved to Strafford.

The façades of the building included criss-crossing timbers, very detailed vergeboard, and other unusual ornamentation. These details were created as a more visible, and probably less expensive answer to the “cobweb”-style stonework of similar stations like Wynnewood.

The ornate building sat directly to the west of the older Italianate Wayne Station, just south of the current right-of-way. The railroad’s plans for re-alignment in Wayne were contemporary with the new development of the town by Anthony J. Drexel and George W. Childs; their planned community north of the railroad depended on the commuter traffic the rails generated, and thus a newer, larger, more architecturally up-to-date station was needed. Their needs were answered by the PRR in 1884 (see page 168 for more on this station), rendering the elaborate Stick style station obsolete.

A mile to the west of Wayne was Eagle (or Spread Eagle), then served by an antique station that was likely not easily accessible by commuters. Only one image of this old station is known to exist: a stereo card commissioned by the Pennsylvania Railroad, this W.T. Purviance photograph shows little of the station behind lush foliage, other than a row of columns (see fig. 2.97). Other buildings, likely freight sheds, stand on the opposite side of the tracks in the photo. Near the location of this original Eagle Station is an old building that fronts on the tracks, supposedly the “Eagle Inn” (see fig. 2.98). Today a doctor’s office building, it is said that this old inn (one of many along the old Lancaster Turnpike) had been a ticket office on the railroad, which makes sense considering its close proximity to the tracks today, even after widenings and re-alignments. It is surrounded by several older buildings with unknown histories. It seems possible that either the inn or the surrounding buildings still extant may have acted as the original Eagle Station.

The town of Eagle's prospects looked nothing like Wayne's, and the railroad determined that the Stick style Wayne Station would better fit the needs of Eagle. As the new station at Wayne was built, the Stick-style building was carefully disassembled and put on a rail car for the short journey to its more permanent home.

The date of this moving varies between sources, which claim it occurred in 1880, 1884 and 1887. The most compelling evidence comes from an issue of the Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club's *History Quarterly*, which quotes the *West Chester Daily Local News*, supposedly from August 9, 1884: "The old Wayne station was, on last Tuesday, successfully moved by rail from Wayne to Eagle, where it will, after painting and general fixing up, serve as a new passenger station."² It wasn't until around February 7, 1887, that the name of the station was formally changed from Eagle to Strafford. "By order of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company the name of Eagle Station, was dropped on Tuesday last, and the new one, Strafford, was adopted, and it will hereafter be known by that name. The Government has also changed the name of the post office from Spread Eagle to Strafford."³

Due to the raised elevation of the railroad at Strafford, a new ground story had to be built beneath the station. This created an awkward appearance, as the old rear entrance hung over the property without stairs or any visible blockage. Soon, that doorway was enclosed with a new restroom addition, clad in stick-style elements that perfectly matched the original building. The ground floor was left with a more plain appearance, with a simple board and batten cladding.

² Goshorn, Bob. "Some Observations on the Strafford Railroad Station." *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club History Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1987, 105-111.

³ "Name of a Station Changed." *West Chester Daily Local News*, February 17, 1887.

Photographs show that the station's original colors were much more understated than most believe. Today's public memory of the station has it with dark green stick details popping out of light beige or yellow walls. In fact, there was originally little contrast between the detail and its backdrop, and at one time the details were actually painted lighter. The first known evidence of the dark-on-light scheme is in a ca. 1910 postcard (see fig. 2.102).

Although the building was moved with its vergeboard and double chimney pots intact, these elements were lost at some point, leaving only the west chimney with a new brick exterior. The original slate roof was also replaced with asphalt shingles at some point.

Today, the small town of Strafford is best known as home of the station, which gained attention through the 20th century among railroad and architectural enthusiasts on a national scale. It has been featured in books on railroad station architecture, and was even profiled with detailed plans in the December, 1977 issue of *Model Railroader* magazine. In addition to being the local transportation hub, the station acted as the Strafford post office between 1887 and 1948.⁴ The depot was recognized by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1958 with two photographs by Ned Goode (at some point expanded to 12 images) (see figs. 2.103, 2.104). On July 26, 1984, thanks to the efforts of the community, Strafford Station was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

⁴ Goshorn, Bob. "Some Observations on the Strafford Railroad Station." *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club History Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1987, 105-111.



Fig. 2.97: The W.T. Purviance stereo card of Eagle Station, ca. 1871. Unfortunately little can be seen of the station behind trees, but this view shows the bucolic nature of the railroad in the 1870s. (New York Public Library)

Fig. 2.98: It seems likely that this building, the Eagle Inn, which stands near the probable location of Eagle Station, had involvement in the railroad, whether or not it was in fact Eagle Station itself. (Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)



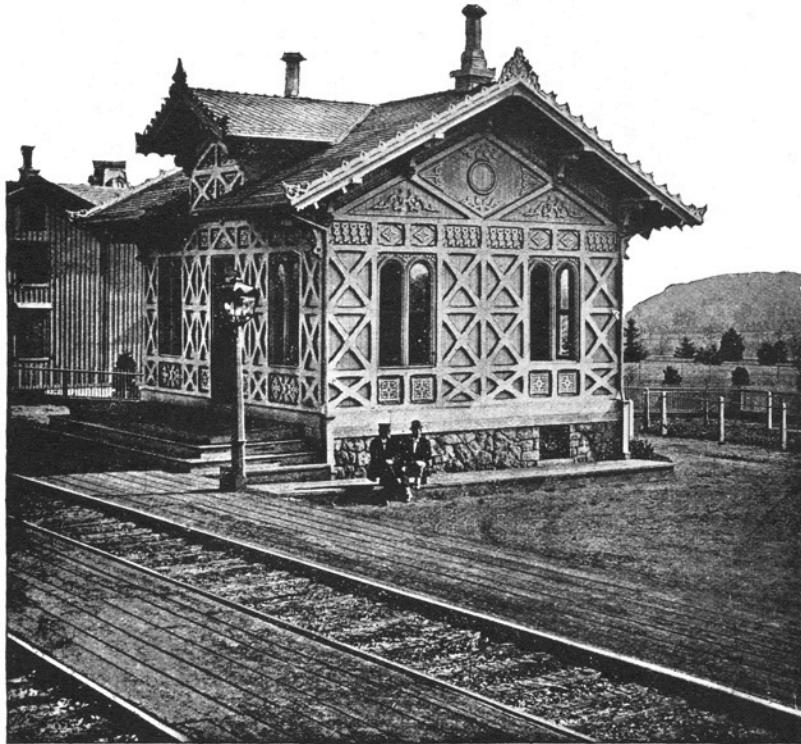


Fig. 2.99: The only known image of the future Strafford Station when it was located in Wayne. At the extreme left is the original Wayne Station, which stood concurrently with the later station. Poking above it is the tower of the Second Empire Louella mansion. (Berg, Walter G., 268.)

Fig. 2.100: Though undated, this is the earliest known photograph of Strafford Station in its present home. Before its restroom bay was added to the rear, the former rear entrance dangled above the ground story. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.101: Strafford Station in 1896. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.102: While a multitude of postcards were produced for stations such as Wayne, this is the only known postcard of Strafford Station. It was printed by W.F. Blatchley of Wayne, and was never postally used. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.103, 2.104: The Historic American Buildings Survey documented Strafford Station with these two photographs by Ned Goode, taken in August, 1958. In the documentation, the Survey noted the false connection between the station and the 1876 Centennial as one reason for its significance. (HABS # PA-268)





Fig. 2.105: Commuters wait for an approaching Pennsylvania Railroad MP54 in 1956. (Collection of the author)

Strafford: Where Railroad Rivals Met

Strafford Station is also unique in its unusual past partnership with the Philadelphia & Western Railway. The P&W (a portion of which still operates as the SEPTA Norristown High Speed Line) was an interurban electric railway that began operation in 1907 with its terminus in Strafford. This original Strafford terminal was a farmhouse, then over a century old, that was converted for station use. In 1911, the P&W curved the end of its line north, looping around 180° to a new station that connected with the Pennsylvania Railroad station's platform.

This linking was unusual, especially since the P&W and PRR were competitors from the start. The PRR fought to suppress the construction of the P&W, which ran basically parallel to the larger (and more expensive to ride) PRR from about Bryn Mawr to Strafford. The P&W's original plan was to forge farther west to Parkesburg, Chester County, but it never got west of Strafford. Its westward ambitions shattered, the P&W probably thought that forming a connection with the PRR would allow passengers to transfer there. Oddly, the P&W loop had a freight siding which met up with the PRR tracks.

The connection of the P&W at Strafford made the double stations a popular subject for photographs. The old P&W cars, built by Brill in the 1920s and nicknamed "Strafford" cars because of their final destination, could be seen alongside lengthy Pennsylvania Railroad passenger trains, as the old Stick-style depot watched over it all.

The P&W folded their Strafford branch in 1956, focusing efforts on their Norristown branch. The Strafford P&W station was leveled, and all traces of the right-of-way were eliminated by the building of the Strafford Station Apartments. A change in the style of metal railings just west of Strafford Station still denotes where the two platforms merged.



Fig. 2.106: A view of the Strafford Philadelphia & Western station, looking west from the Strafford Pennsylvania Railroad platform. A large sign on the P&W station's roof attempted to draw attention from PRR commuters, and was visible both from the platform and passing trains. (From DeGraw)

Fig. 2.107: A Pennsylvania Railroad passenger train heads east, on the right-of-way overlooking the Strafford P&W station and "Strafford" car #161. This photo was taken in the 1950s, shortly before this branch of the P&W was shut down. (Photo by Bob Foley, courtesy of Rich Allman)



Fire and Rebirth

SEPTA began creating plans to restore Strafford Station in the late 1990s, and the contract for the \$1.9 million project was awarded on June 25, 1999. Early in the morning of June 29, an electrical spark started a fire in the station's basement. An Amtrak contractor noticed the flames, and alerted authorities. Four fire companies responded, and the fire was under control by 2:45 am. The most severe damage was to the station's east façade.⁵ According to SEPTA, it took two months to dry out the station following the blaze, which caused \$200,000 in damage.⁶

The fire forced the project architects, DPK&A, to rethink their plans. In December, 1999, the station was jacked up six inches to be rolled south into the parking lot for extensive renovations. Later that month, the building was moved, for the second time in its nearly 125 years, this time just 50 feet to the south. Here, contractors were able to do more careful work to the building and its platform, without the interference of commuters, as the station remained open during the entire process.

Improvements included a new slate roof, historic paint analysis, installation of air conditioning and new restroom facilities. Several ornamental features had to be replicated, and most features on the east façade were completely replaced (see fig. 2.109). After most work on the station was complete, it was rolled back into place, and the 1890-1900-era outbound shelter was rolled into the north parking lot for restoration (see figs. 2.110, 2.11). Both the shelter and the station were raised several inches to accommodate new concrete platforms. Handicapped-

⁵ Puleo, Catherine M. "Electrical Fire Guts Train Station." *Suburban and Wayne Times*, July 1, 1999.

⁶ Cooper, Helen. "Strafford, Radnor Train Station Rehab Back on Track After Delays." *Suburban and Wayne Times*, August 23, 2001.

accessible ramps were added to provide access to the platforms that sat high above the parking lots. The final cost of the project was \$4.3 million, most of which came from federal grants.

On May 15, 2002, the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia recognized the renovation with a 2002 Outstanding Preservation Project Award, in a ceremony at the former PSFS Building in Philadelphia.⁷ At a banquet held on November 20, 2002, the Southeast Pennsylvania Chapter of Associated Builders and Contractors recognized Fries Construction Management for their work on Strafford Station, in the “Restoration/Renovation Over \$3 Million” category.⁸ The proud Strafford community dedicated the re-opening of the station in an event on October 20, 2003.⁹ Soon after restoration, a coffee bar opened in the restored station.

⁷ SEPTA Public Relations. “SEPTA’s Historic Strafford Station Honored with an Outstanding Preservation Project Award.” May 13, 2002.

⁸ Southeast Pennsylvania ABC Press Release. “Southeast Pennsylvania ABC Announces Award Winning Projects.” 2002.

⁹ Gilliland, Betsy. “A double dedication in Strafford.” *Suburban and Wayne Times*, October 17, 2002.



Fig. 2.108: This image of the burned-out station appeared in the *Suburban & Wayne Times* two days after the fire, July 1, 1999.

Fig. 2.109: After being rolled back into place, the station received a reconstructed east façade. (Photo by the author, ca. 2001)





Fig. 2.110, 2.111: When the station had been rolled back to the platform, its outbound shelter was moved into the north parking lot for restoration. (Photos by the author, ca. 2001)

Current Conditions

Nearly ten years following the completion of SEPTA's restoration of Strafford, the station has been plagued by its unavoidable exposure to sunlight. The lack of trees in the area and the extreme southern exposure have led to fading and peeling paint.

Though restored carefully during the award-winning, three year long project, Strafford Station has not received much of any attention since work wrapped up in 2002. The result is water damage, chipping paint, and an accumulation of bird droppings. It is evident that SEPTA needs a five year upkeep/repainting schedule at the very least if it wants to keep its historic stations looking and functioning the way they should.

Over to the outbound shelter, graffiti has been painted over with non-matching colors, resulting in many blocks of gray on top of the restored light beige (see fig. 2.114). Even the comparatively shaded north façade of the shelter is peeling to a large degree, which suggests that the kind of paint used in the 1999-2002 restoration was somehow improperly applied.



Fig. 2.112: Strafford Station looking west from the south platform. (Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)



Fig. 2.113: The outbound platform in January, 2010. It is a standard Pennsylvania Railroad shelter, similar to others on the Main Line. Thoroughly restored during the 2002 project, even its standing-seam metal roof was accurately replaced. (Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)

Fig. 2.114: Looking west from the north platform, showing the structure of the outbound shelter and blocks of non-matching paint covering over graffiti. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.115: Two identical decorative details under a pair of windows; the one on left is a reproduction, the one on right is original. (Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)

Fig. 2.116: The interior of the station waiting room in 2010. The corner benches and wainscoting are believed to be original. (Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)





Fig. 2.117: A portion of the south façade, showing the effects of the extreme sunlight on this side of the building.
(Photo by the author, January 20, 2010)



Fig. 2.118, left: Inadequate gutters have led to water damage, as seen here on the east façade.

Fig. 2.119, below: A SEPTA sign originally intended to hang was unsympathetically attached to the façade over the former transom window.

(Photos by the author, January 20, 2010)



The Centennial Exposition Myth

For decades, it has been believed by some that Strafford Station first stood not in Wayne, but on the Belmont Plateau as a fixture at the 1876 Centennial Exposition. The Pennsylvania Railroad had a presence there, and according to legend, at the closure of the great fair this small shed was purchased by the railroad for use as a depot.

Accounts have varied as to the station's purpose at the Centennial. First, it was claimed that it was the Japanese House, put together by Japanese craftsmen with wooden pegs, not iron nails. Japanese craftsmen were present at the Centennial, and in fact, the presence of their art and craftsmanship inspired American architects to use Japanese motifs in their work, especially in ornamentation. It is easy to see how a casual observer might make the connection between the Japanese presence at the Centennial and the unusual level of detail on Strafford Station, but the actual Japanese House, according to engravings from the fair, was much larger than the station.

The next theory was much more plausible. It stated that Strafford Station was actually Catalogue Building Number Two, one of the small buildings where visitors would go to pick up the fair's official publications. The building seemed to be about the right size for this function, and such a building would have been located near the railroad's depot at the Centennial. However, an engraving of a small catalogue building found in the official catalogue itself shows a totally different building. The structure depicted is also highly ornamented, so it is not difficult to imagine an "old-timer" in the early 20th century remembering that building from their youth and matching that hazy recollection with Strafford's architecture. The station has also been variously described as the Illinois Building and as a part of the British Building.¹⁰

¹⁰ Goshorn, Bob. "Some Observations on the Strafford Railroad Station." *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club History Quarterly*, Vol. 25, No. 3, July 1987, 105-111.

How did this long-standing myth gain traction? It could have come about from a local history newspaper column by Emma C. Patterson in 1950, which stated:

Strafford Station in its present form is a relic of the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition held in 1876, where it was originally known as the Japanese Building. Built by Japanese workmen, it was put together with wooden pegs instead of iron nails. When the Pennsylvania Railroad first bought it at the close of the Centennial, they placed it at Wayne. However, in 1887 it was moved westward to Eagle, after the Drexel and Childs real estate development made a larger station at Wayne imperative. Soon thereafter the name of Eagle was changed to Strafford.

Most of the information for this column came from an older Strafford resident, Martha Wentworth Suffren. Ms. Suffren's parents are credited in the column with designating the area "Strafford."¹¹

On July 16, 1954, Ms. Patterson followed up her 1950 column with an update, having just discovered an image of the Japanese Pavilion. It would have been clear to any viewer that it was a very different building being shown, but no mention of this dissimilarity is made. Ms. Patterson also quotes "notes regarding certain stations on the Main Line of the Pennsylvania Railroad," which supposedly were held in the "library of the Railroad." The notes seem to corroborate the Centennial story, but its sources remain unknown.¹²

In 1973, Randolph Bye's book of watercolor paintings called "The Vanishing Depot" also made the Centennial



Fig. 2.120: The actual Centennial Catalogue Building was close to Strafford Station in style and size, but far from a match. (*Official Catalogue of the U.S. International Exhibition 1876, Revised Edition.*)

¹¹ Patterson, Emma C. "Your Town and My Town." *Suburban and Wayne Times*, June 16, 1950.

¹² Patterson, Emma C. "Your Town and My Town." *Suburban and Wayne Times*, July 16, 1954.

Catalogue Building claim. This story was perpetuated on a national scale in December 1977, when quoted in a feature on Strafford Station in *Model Railroader* magazine.¹³

The original date of construction of the station at Wayne is believed to be 1873, though that could be disproved pending further research. At best, the station could have been built from recycled lumber that was supposedly auctioned off at the close of the fair in 1877; the many temporary buildings yielded a few million board feet of lumber. This lumber could have been used to build the depot, but the station in its current form did not originate at the Centennial.

What is unambiguous is the similarity in architecture between Strafford and the station at Wynnewood (and, to a lesser degree, Narberth (Elm) and Haverford). Wynnewood, built six years before the Centennial, shares certain traits with Strafford that cannot be explained other than to say that they came from the same architect's hand, or at least the same Pennsylvania Railroad engineer's office. Below are simplified front and side elevations; all of the features shown below are shared by both Strafford and Wynnewood stations.

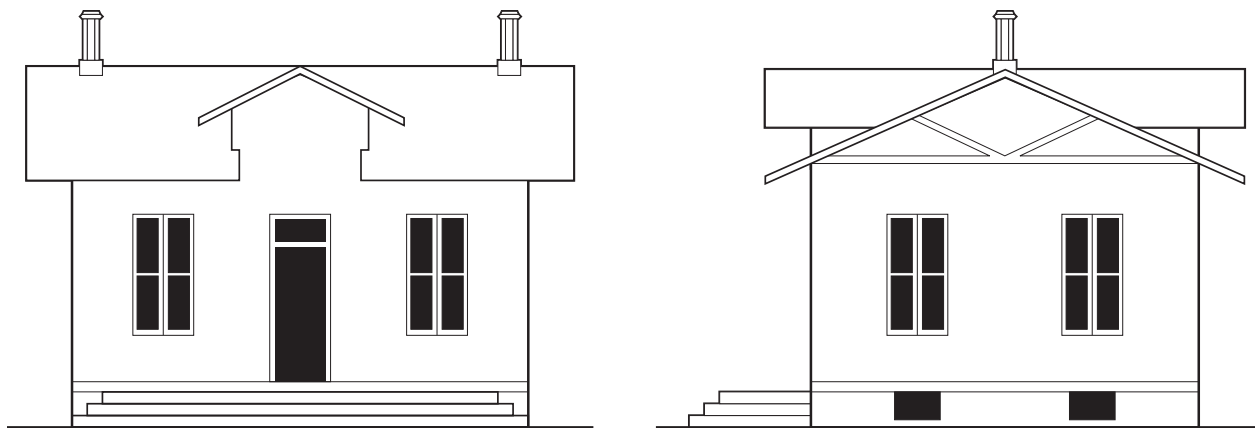


Fig. 2.121: Drawing showing the shared features of both Strafford and Wynnewood Stations in their original forms. (Drawing by the author)

¹³ Drury, George. "Gingerbread Station." *Model Railroader*, December, 1977, 92-95.

RADNOR STATION

The small enclave known as Morgan's Corner (or Morgan's Corners) was a community consisting of a schoolhouse, businesses, and train station in the vicinity of King of Prussia Road, and the Chew family's famous "Vanor" estate. Morgan's Corner was located less than a mile to the west of Radnor Station, a stop on what would become the Israel Morris estate. Following re-alignments of the railroad in 1872 and 1873, Morgan's Corner was renamed "Radnor," and the old Radnor station was renamed "Upton."

Upton Station is not significant enough to warrant its own chapter, but the legend surrounding its abandonment is worth mentioning. Israel Morris owned the estate "Dundale" (now part of Villanova University), located just north of the railroad. Upton Station likely predated the estate, but it remained an active stop, largely for the use of Morris and his guests. The Pennsylvania Railroad Board abolished the station at their November 1, 1899 meeting, though the reason is subject of rumor. According to legend, a passing train failed to pick up Israel Morris's guests, which led to an indignant letter from Morris to Pennsylvania Railroad president Alexander J. Cassatt (another Main Line estate owner). Cassatt's response was that "it would never happen again," and keeping his word, the station was removed! Looking back, Upton was rather extraneous. Without it, Villanova and Radnor Stations are roughly a mile apart, the standard distance between the Main Line stations.

The new Radnor Station was built around the time of the re-alignment of the rails, 1872 or 1873. Its design was by Joseph M. Wilson and Frederick G. Thorn, based upon that of Wynnewood Station, with two major distinctions. First, Radnor was constructed of red brick,

with some courses of tan brick. Second, adjoining the waiting room was a two story stationmaster's cottage, a feature not found at Wynnewood that more than doubled the size of the building. As the station was built on sloping ground, it was given a basement/ground floor level. A nearly identical station was built by the Pennsylvania Railroad at Hawkins, just east of Pittsburgh, though, because it was built on flat ground, did not require the basement/ground floor level (see fig. 2.124).¹

Architecturally, the station is one of the most interesting on the Main Line. The coloring of its brickwork, detailed woodwork and decorative iron grates over the basement windows are rare features. The fact that it remains set on its original lawn, in the shade of large trees, adds to its ambiance. It almost looks as if the station were still a residence. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission deemed Radnor Station eligible for the National Register of Historic Places on March 22, 1993.

Early in its history, Radnor Station was given a major addition to the trackside façade. Located at the intersection of the waiting room and residence sections, this semi-octagonal addition was built of brick to match the surrounding station, even continuing the tan brick courses. It gave more room to the residence, and a new door to the living area from the platform. It is not known why this addition was needed, but it may have been necessitated by the station's added use as a post office.²

¹ Wilson Brothers & Co. *Catalogue of Work Executed*. Plate following p. 50.

² The unusual addition of the semi-octagonal projection confuses some who attempt to analyze the station's chronology. The now-defunct website of restoration architects DPK&A falsely stated: "The original brick and stone station building is the lower half of the current structure; a larger train master's house was built on the northwest side shortly after original construction." (http://web.archive.org/web/20030511154622/dpka.com/Project+Pages/radnor_station.htm) The references in the Wilsons' *Catalogue of Work Executed*, and a more recently discovered early photo of the station (figure 2.123) prove that the station and residence were built concurrently.

Radnor Station fell victim to a catastrophic freight accident in the 1920s. Freight wrecks were common, but this particular accident occurred directly in front of the station. Cars and their contents tumbled over the bridge at King of Prussia Road (see figs. 2.128, 2.129).

The area surrounding Radnor Station was an active place compared with other Main Line communities, originally home to an active mill and farming community, but it became more important than ever in the 1950s. The former Chew estate and St. Davids Golf Club property became available, and were developed with large buildings of very modern architecture. These included offices of the Burroughs Corporation, the national headquarters of TV Guide magazine, the laboratories of Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a new Radnor High School and eventually the headquarters of the Chilton Book Company, all built within walking distance of Radnor Station. This pattern of growth symbolized an influx of workplaces to the suburbs; the Main Line was growing as a place to commute to rather than one from which to commute downtown.

Radnor Station's waiting shelter, a rare case of an *inbound* shelter (on the south side of the tracks, where city-bound passengers would wait), was a standard 1890s-era design with an enclosed section. After years without upkeep, the deteriorated structure was replaced by SEPTA ca. 2000 with a glass and metal structure that does not complement the historic station.

Ironically, the removal of the shelter coincided with SEPTA's historically-focused work on the station. DPK&A Architects acted as restoration consultants, simultaneously consulting for the restorations of Overbrook and Strafford Stations. During the work, the building's brick was repointed, stone jack arches were reset, and a maintenance shed was removed. A completely new slate roof was installed, and standing-seam metal roofing placed on the platform roof canopy.³

³ DPK&A Architects. "Historic Rehabilitation of the Radnor SEPTA Station," via archive.org. http://web.archive.org/web/20030511154622/dpka.com/Project+Pages/radnor_station.htm

While a great deal of work was done on the exterior of the building and the public waiting room, the agent's residence was left unfinished (though it does appear that some interior work was done there). This large amount of space, spanning three stories, is ideal potential real estate for office space. The area surrounding Radnor Station continues to be a desirable location for doctor's offices, restaurants, apartments, and businesses. It seems that SEPTA and Amtrak have a great opportunity to use this historic space, which would bring in revenue and ensure the upkeep of the building.



Fig. 2.122: This photograph by Purviance shows Morgan's Corner in the 1860s. Because of re-alignments, it is difficult to compare the location of this photograph with today's Radnor Station. (Radnor Historical Society)



Fig. 2.123: The earliest known photograph of Radnor Station is this cyanotype in an album dating to the 1880s. It is the only known image showing the station before its semi-octagonal addition and platform canopy roofs. (Halsey Album, Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.124: Hawkins Station, just east of Pittsburgh. It was nearly identical to Radnor Station, except for being built on a flat plot, not on an embankment. (Wilson Bros. & Co. *Catalogue of Work Executed.*)





Fig. 2.125: A ca. 1907 postcard of Radnor Station, photographed by Lucy Sampson. (Collection of the author)

Fig. 2.126: Another postcard of Radnor Station, printed by C.W. Bensinger. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.127: The bridge over King of Prussia Road, adjoining Radnor Station. (Hagley Museum and Library)
Fig. 2.128: The same bridge was seriously damaged by a freight train wreck in the 1920s. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.129: A view of the same 1920s freight wreck, which happened directly in front of Radnor Station. At left is the inbound shelter. (Radnor Historical Society)
 Fig. 2.130: Radnor Station in 2010, looking northeast. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.131: Radnor Station's lawn and nearby trees contribute to its legacy of being one of the Main Line's most picturesque stops. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.132: The rear of the building, looking southwest in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.133: Original roof support brackets still exist, though an extended roof canopy was added to the track side of the station over a century ago. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.134: The station retains ornamental grilles over its basement windows. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



VILLANOVA STATION

For being such an old and institutionally important stop on the PRR, there is little documentary or photographic record of Villanova Station. Originally called “Villa Nova” on the Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad, the depot was important for its connection to the adjoining college, much like Haverford College Station. Established in 1842, Villanova University (originally the Augustinian College of Villa Nova) was built between the two major access roads of the area: Lancaster Turnpike and the P&C Railroad. Today, it is a major university in terms of academics and athletics. The PRR Main Line still bisects the campus, which has since expanded to the north side of the railroad.

Villa Nova was an important stop on the railroad from very early on, because of its proximity of the college. A small depot, square in plan, stood on the south side of the tracks (possibly identical to the structure at Athensville seen in fig. 2.76). Following re-alignments, a new Villa Nova Station was built in the early 1870s. Although its materials and appearance were similar to stations farther west such as Elm and Wynnewood, Villa Nova’s design was unique. It consisted of a waiting room with attached agents’ residence, while other stations integrated the two in a single massing. Villa Nova Station was a prototype of this layout, which was replicated in spirit if not design in Radnor, and eventually Wayne and St. Davids Stations.

As Villanova Station stands in the middle of the university’s campus, the school has rightfully took symbolic ownership of the depot. It is as much a gateway to the university as the entries visible from Lancaster Avenue. In the mid-2000s, the trim and canopies of the station were painted blue and white, the school colors. Now, the university has contributed funds

towards its restoration. This project, scheduled to begin in the near future, will, as currently planned, have some serious preservation implications impacting the station's integrity.

SEPTA's desire for high-level train access at all stations has driven the Villanova renovation to include raised concrete platforms in front of the station itself. This single design decision will have far-reaching consequences. First, the platforms will be installed on top of the historic PRR-standard brick platforms, which are now rare in their intact form on the Main Line. Ornamental iron grilles over the station's basement windows will be covered, and the detailed iron railing of the front entrance will no longer be needed. A new underground passenger tunnel will be dug to the east, the old one abandoned, and its hairpin fence removed. Most importantly, the ca. 1880-90 platform canopies will be completely replaced on both sides of the tracks. The platforms will receive new metal canopies that will cover more of the station from the south side, as they are to be taller than the current canopies.

In addition to the exterior alterations, the station will be made completely ADA-compliant. In order to achieve this, the restroom doorways, which are surrounded by thick masonry walls, must be widened. The significant engineering task of removing portions of the load-bearing stone walls will give the doors the couple of extra inches they need for compliance.

As of this writing, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has yet to give comment on the plans. In Wayne, SEPTA's construction plans were altered after advisement by the commission to preserve historic canopies and other features; there is no indication yet that SEPTA will be forced to do the same at Villanova.

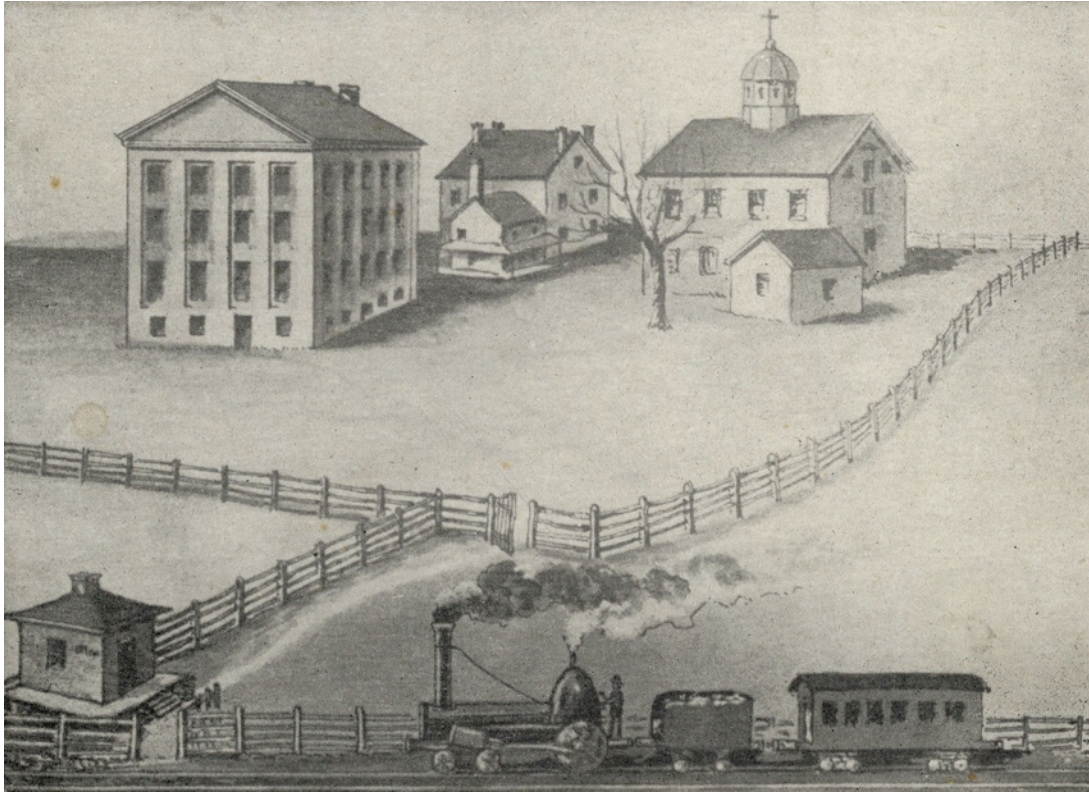


Fig. 2.135: A drawing of Villa Nova College, ca. 1849, and the railroad running north of the academic buildings. The small building in the lower left was the depot during the time of the P&C. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.136: Mid-20th century view of Villanova Station, looking northwest. (From west2k.com)





Fig. 2.137: An image of the station in 1991. From the Villanova University Archives web page, where the caption reads: “The Villanova train station continues to serve students today as it did in the past. For many it represents the first step toward the future.” (Photograph by Alan Nyiri, Villanova University Archives)
 Fig. 2.138: The station’s south façade in 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.139: Looking northwest at Villanova Station, 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.140: Ornamental ironwork that, according to current designs, is to be covered by a new high-level passenger platform. (Photo by the author, March 22, 2011)





Fig. 2.141: Stairs and ornamental railing that new high-level platforms will render obsolete. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.142: Detail of brackets supporting the roof over the rear entry. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.143: View of the ticket window, on the east wall of the waiting room. (Photo by the author, March 22, 2011)

Fig. 2.144: The inbound canopy has an enclosed waiting area, similar to that at Wynnewood Station. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



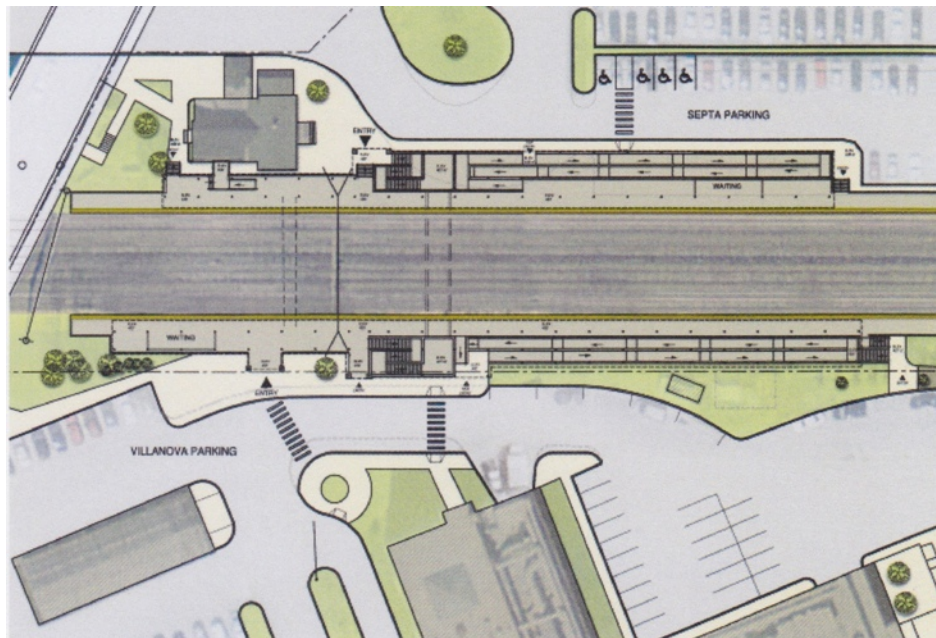
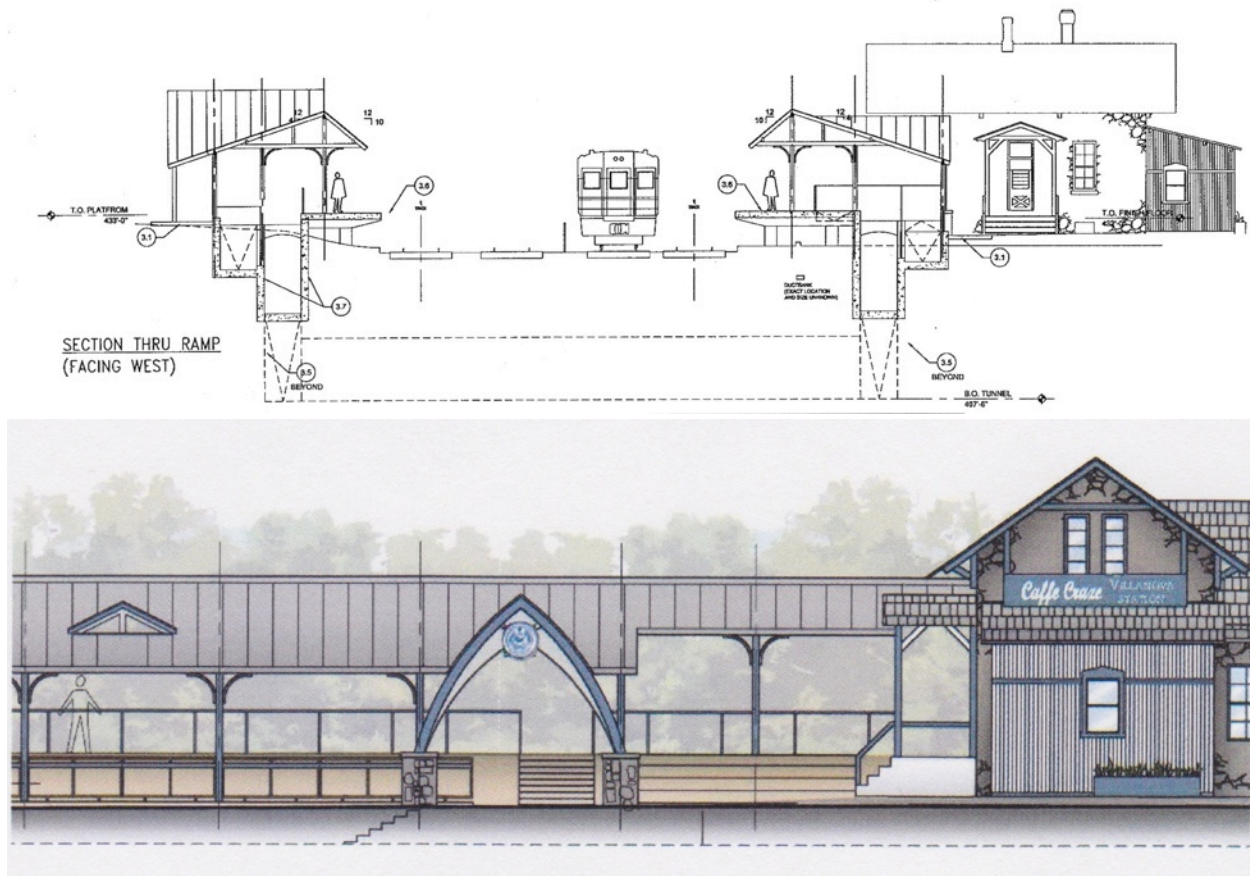


Fig. 2.145, 2.146, 2.147: As of March 2011, the plans for Villanova Station's restoration involve installing new metal framed and roofed shelters on either side of the tracks. In cross-section, they resemble the historic canopies, but vary in scale. An acknowledgement of the University (and a recognition of their contribution to the renovation), a Gothic arch element with the school seal at its peak is a major new addition. (All drawings courtesy of Converse Winkler Architects)

BERWYN STATION

Originally known as Reeseville, Berwyn is a town with portions in both Tredyffrin and Easttown Townships. Land for the Reeseville Station was sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad by John Kugler and his wife, Hannah, in 1859, for \$150.¹ A small wood station was built there, but the railroad's main attraction to Reeseville was for freight. The William H. Fritz Lumber Company, just east of the station, was founded in 1863 and is still in operation today. The founder of the firm, William H. Fritz, was killed on November 5, 1870, by a train at the old Eagle Station two stops east of today's Berwyn Station. Fritz Lumber is now in its fifth generation of family ownership,² and maintains an impressive and rare grouping of late 19th century buildings along Lancaster Avenue. It stands as a remarkably intact example of the kind of business that bordered and directly benefitted from the railroad.

By the end of the 1870s, it was becoming clear that the modest wood station at Berwyn (which had changed its name from Reeseville in 1877) was insufficient for the needs of the growing town. On a single Sunday morning in April 1879, 900 quarts of milk were picked up from the station.³ At that same time, the railroad was planning a new building for Berwyn, said to be "thirty feet square and two and a half stories high."

For whatever reason, those 1879 plans were never carried out. In 1880 the residents of Berwyn were forced to petition the Pennsylvania Railroad to build their new station. They cited a report that Berwyn's passenger traffic alone netted the railroad \$643.15. Isaac Cleaver

¹ Okie, Howard S. "Local Titles in Easttown and Tredyffrin Article VII The Reeseville Station Tract." *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club Quarterly*, January 1941, 12.

² "History of Fritz Lumber." <http://www.fritzlumber.com/history.htm>

³ Goshorn, Bob. "The Berwyn Railroad Station." *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club Quarterly*, January 1989, 3.

collected signatures at his store, and the petition was sent to the railroad a month later. By November, 1880, the railroad had sent its engineers to survey the site of the new station. In February, 1881, the *Daily Local News* of West Chester reported that a “new brick depot, two stories, with ample accommodations for passengers and freight and residence for a family, will be one of the early spring improvements, to be commenced before June 15th next.” The construction contract was signed by “E.C. Humes, John P. Harris, G.W. Hoover and W.V. Hughes, doing business in the name of Hoover, Hughes and Company, of Philipsburg, Centre County, Penna.” Unlike the builders of other Main Line stations, the contractors tasked with building Berwyn Station came from quite a distance.

Work commenced in April, 1881 with the digging of a foundation. By the end of the month, however, the railroad had decided to change the building’s location, following requests from residents. The old foundation was filled with the dirt of the new one. The new station was 20 by 54 feet, with 15 foot first story and 10 foot second story. Glazed bricks and Ohio stone provided accents. Stonework was done by Peter Burns, brickwork was by Patterson & Smith, and Emmet Hampton of West Chester was hired to paint fancy brickwork. When Hampton was done in February, 1882, his work was said to have been not pleasing to the eye, so it was repainted in April. Grading on the site was begun in mid-December 1881, finished in January, and re-graded in 1886 for the installation of flower beds.⁴

Coinciding with Berwyn Station’s construction, and possibly the main reason for its replacement, was Alexander J. Cassatt’s purchase of Chesterbrook Farm in 1881. Though credit is given to Berwyn residents for their petitioning of the railroad for the station, it was more likely

⁴ Goshorn, Bob. “The Berwyn Railroad Station.” *Tredyffrin-Easttown History Club Quarterly*, January 1989, 3-6. Many more details of the construction can be found in this article, which quotes heavily from *West Chester Daily Local* newspapers of the time.

the pressure of Cassatt, who likely wanted a handsome station for his own use. Cassatt personally had the road from Chesterbrook Farm to Berwyn Station macadamized, so it seems likely that he would have required an attractive station to frequent. The new depot was commodious, with enough room for railroad personnel to work and live on-site.

The design of Berwyn Station is an unusual one, and points to a time of transition in the architecture of the Pennsylvania Railroad, and of Wilson Brothers & Co. This was the first Main Line station of the 1880s (it is believed to be Wilson Bros & Co.'s only Main Line design as an independent firm), and the first Main Line station built after a long dry period starting in about 1873. Berwyn Station's plan and elevations are completely symmetrical, much like the stations of the 1870s. However, it is larger than the Haverford/Wynnewood designs, yet rectangular in plan unlike the larger Bryn Mawr/Ardmore layouts. Its level of detail also points to a transition in style. Bricks were used as the primary material in Radnor, which even had decorative tan brick coursework, but the railroad decided to add painted bricks and other decorative façade work to Berwyn, as well as a gable decoration that hung from the peak of each side gable. The two stories were separated by an overhanging roof, supported by brackets that encircled the whole building rather than just the waiting platform.

Cassatt Avenue, by which Alexander Cassatt himself would have crossed the tracks to reach the station, used to span the right of way with a bridge just west of Berwyn Station. This was replaced with a pedestrian-only bridge; in the 20th century the only major draw to the other side of the tracks (besides the outbound platform and the neighboring residential section) was the town's movie theater. Now an office building, the old theater has been renamed "Cassatt Crossing."

In the 1980s, Berwyn Station underwent renovations. In 1988, builder John J. Shields Jr. took out a long-term lease on the station, and spent \$200,000 on improvements.⁵ At the same time, Bob Macchione was looking for a unique location for an art framing business. He searched for an old house to renovate, but soon discovered that space in the 100 year old station was available. The building was somewhat of a wreck at the time, but it was in the center of town; an ideal location. The Frame Station Gallery has operated on the ground floor ever since.⁶ The work of Shields included some noticeable changes to the station, most significantly the addition of a greenhouse-like single-story addition on the front of the building. Its curving, tinted glass detracts visibly from the the station's historic character but gives needed space to the gallery.

SEPTA later performed further renovations to Berwyn Station, concluding in 1999. This \$4.1 million project included replacement of the Cassatt Avenue pedestrian bridge. On an evening in April, 1998, cranes lifted the new bridge into place.⁷ A ceremony on May 13, 1999 opened the bridge for service, and dedicated the Easttown Memorial for veterans at its base. Other SEPTA improvements to the station included the addition of accessible ramps, new canopies and stairs, and new concrete platforms.⁸

Today, Berwyn stands as one of the best kept stations on the Main Line. This largely results from its full-time occupation by a retail business. The Frame Station Gallery has proved to be a worthy tenant for over 20 years, drawing new attention to the station and its re-use. Its example is one that can be put to good use throughout the Main Line.

⁵ O'Neill, Robert F. "Old Train Stations on Right Track." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 22, 1993.

⁶ Interview of Bob Macchione from "Pennsylvania Train Stations: Restored and Revitalized."

⁷ PR Newswire. "SEPTA Installs New Pedestrian Bridge Over Cassatt Avenue." April 24, 1998.

⁸ PR Newswire. "SEPTA to Commemorate Completion of Berwyn Station Improvement Project, New Cassatt Ave. Bridge." May 11, 1999.



Fig. 2.148: A view of Berwyn Station, looking northwest, shortly after construction in the 1880s. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)

Fig. 2.149: The station as seen from the Cassatt Avenue bridge in 1888. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)

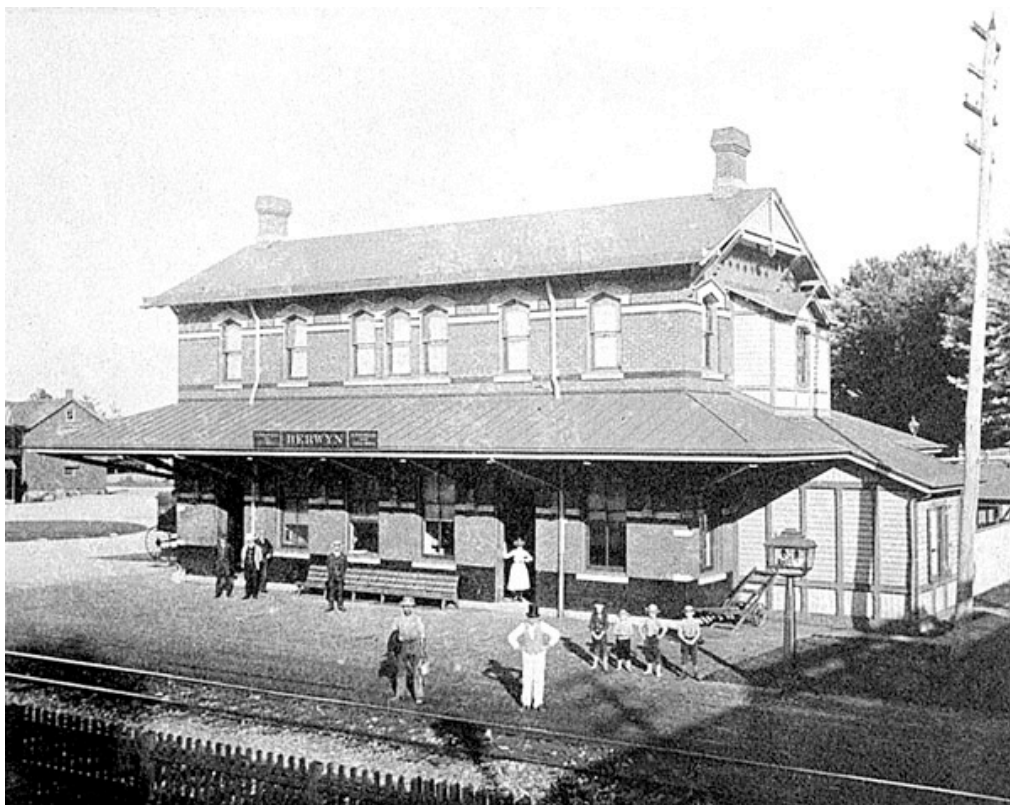




Fig. 2.150: A luggage tag used by A.J. Cassatt, labeled “Berwyn Station.”

Fig. 2.151: The station in 1983, shortly before its renovation. (*Suburban & Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.152: Berwyn Station before the 1980s renovations. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)

Fig. 2.153: The station in 2010, looking northwest. Prominent in the present façade is the presence of the Frame Station Gallery. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.154: Detail of the west gable, showing how brick detail and gable decoration has been lost over the years (compare with fig. 2.148). (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.155: Looking west towards the station and Cassatt Avenue pedestrian bridge. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.156: Looking southeast at the station and outbound shelter, from the Cassatt Avenue pedestrian bridge. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.157: The ca. 1880s-1890s outbound shelter, looking northeast. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



DEVON STATION

The original Devon Station was built in 1881, on property located a block east of the station's present location. This depot, as seen in a railroad atlas of that year, was located on the southeast corner of the railroad and South Valley Forge Road, a once prominent artery that is now fragmented because of the railroad and the re-alignment of Lancaster Avenue. A bridge over the tracks at this location is still present, though now abandoned. According to a Pennsylvania Railroad construction contract of 1881, "a frame Passenger Station and dwelling combined one mile west of Eagle Station" (the name Devon had not been assigned yet) was to be built by September 15 of that year. Though not conclusive, it is thought that the station described in the contract is the station at S. Valley Forge Road. The builder was William H. Burns.

Borrowing the layout of Wayne Station and details from his 1881 design of a dwelling at Wayne Station, architect Washington Bleddyn Powell¹ designed Devon in a more Tudor Revival-inspired aesthetic than Wayne. Although Devon and Wayne Stations shared much in the way of layout and massing, Devon's materials were decidedly higher-end. The roof was Peach Bottom Roofing Slate. Terra Cotta was not only used on roof ridges, but tiles were also applied to the

¹ Although there is no concrete evidence to name Powell as the architect of Devon Station, it seems likely, as the architecture resembles both Wayne Station and the unexecuted Wayne Station Dwelling, both designed by Powell. He also signed Devon's construction contract. Many sources cite G.W. and W.D. Hewitt as architects of Devon Station, which would make sense, as the Hewitts designed the Devon Inn, also built in 1883. However, these sources appear to have referenced the *American Architect and Architecture* magazine, Vol. 15, p. 23, the relevant portion of which is shown below. The wording "Devon Station, Philadelphia R.R. [sic]" refers to the town or post office, rather than the station itself. The citation in the journal is for the Devon Inn, not the station.

DEVON STATION, PHILADELPHIA R. R. — Devon Inn, built of brownstone and brick, length, 312' with wing 42' x 140', four-st'y; cost, \$152,000; plans by G. W. & W. D. Hewitt, architects, Philadelphia.

chimneys. Whereas Wayne Station was clad in brick up to the second story, Devon was built of brown stone (possibly supplied to match the Devon Inn). Most of its California Redwood shingles were cut to create decorative patterns rather than straight rows. It's clear that Devon Station was to be special; not larger than Wayne in scale, but definitely more of a showpiece for the PRR. With the building of the new Devon Inn, perhaps the railroad saw potential in Devon as a summer resort, similar to how Bryn Mawr was treated 13 years previously.

Such expectant promise for resort traffic seems clear in PRR Summer Excursion books of 1884 and 1885. A full page engraving found in both of these books depicts the Devon Inn, guests playing tennis, and finally, the train station at Devon (see fig. 2.158). It is somewhat of a caricature of the depot, but it is unmistakable. Its inclusion in the book of high-class vacation spots is significant; the gateway to the resort of Devon was as attractive as the resort itself.

Following the lead of the Bryn Mawr Hotel, the Devon Inn was built about 6 miles west of Bryn Mawr in what was then a much more rural setting. The original inn burned to the ground over the course of two hours on August 13, 1883.² The hotel proprietors wasted no time, and had architects G.W. and W.D. Hewitt design a new hotel that same year. George W. Hewitt was formerly a principal in the firm Furness & Hewitt (with Frank Furness), until he partnered with his brother, William.³ A wide boulevard led directly from the station to the Inn. As the resort business died off, the hotel became the first home of the Valley Forge Military Academy in 1928. After just five months in residence there, the building caught fire and was completely destroyed. According to some rumors the fire was started by a cadet's cigarette.

² "A Summer Hotel Burned." *New York Times*, August 14, 1883.

³ Tatman, Sandra L. "Furness & Hewitt: Biography from the American Architects and Buildings Database."

The second major draw to Devon was the Devon Horse Show, which started in 1896 and continues to this day. The Horse Show is the oldest and largest outdoor multi-breed horse show in the country,⁴ and takes place over a few days in May and June each year, though other events occupy the grounds throughout the year. Originally the Devon Inn hosted visitors to the show, and of course commuters from the city used Devon Station to reach the fair, which is within walking distance of the railroad. A transplanted country fair in the middle of the Main Line, the horse show brings a flavor to the area that is somewhat alien to the sophisticates who call the region home. Still, they take it as an opportunity for social climbing, and thus use the show as a successful fundraiser for the Bryn Mawr Hospital.

The Devon Station erected concurrently with the inn was built by William H. Bilyeu, according to the PRR contract signed on November 7, 1882. Bilyeu also built Wayne Station; the contract for that depot was signed four days later. The two stations are closely linked by architect, builder, and building date. The design of Devon Station was adapted for a PRR standard design that was probably first used in Homewood Pa., just east of Pittsburgh.⁵ It was a simplified version of Devon Station, with more Tudor Revival details and less ornamentation in the way of shingles, and a brick first story rather than stone. This standard design would be used twice on the Main Line (at St. Davids and Rosemont), and also in Downingtown, a station west of Paoli.

In 1983, Devon Station's 100th birthday, Amtrak decided to pursue redevelopment of the station property. This was part of an effort to more profitably use the agency's existing real

⁴ Wikipedia: "Devon Horse Show." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Devon_Horse_Show

⁵ Wilson Brothers & Co. take credit for a station at Homewood in their 1885 book *Catalogue of Work Executed*. No mention is made of Devon in the same book; perhaps they adapted the plans of Devon Station for use as a standard design.

estate, and simultaneously restore dilapidated station structures by working with real estate developers. The effort resulted in a number of proposals, none of which panned out. Amtrak and SEPTA have not done any substantial repair work to Devon Station since, in hopes that a development plan may, after 28 years, finally become reality. No such plans are forthcoming.

A closer look at 28 years of development proposals and Devon Station's potential for re-use is found in chapter five.

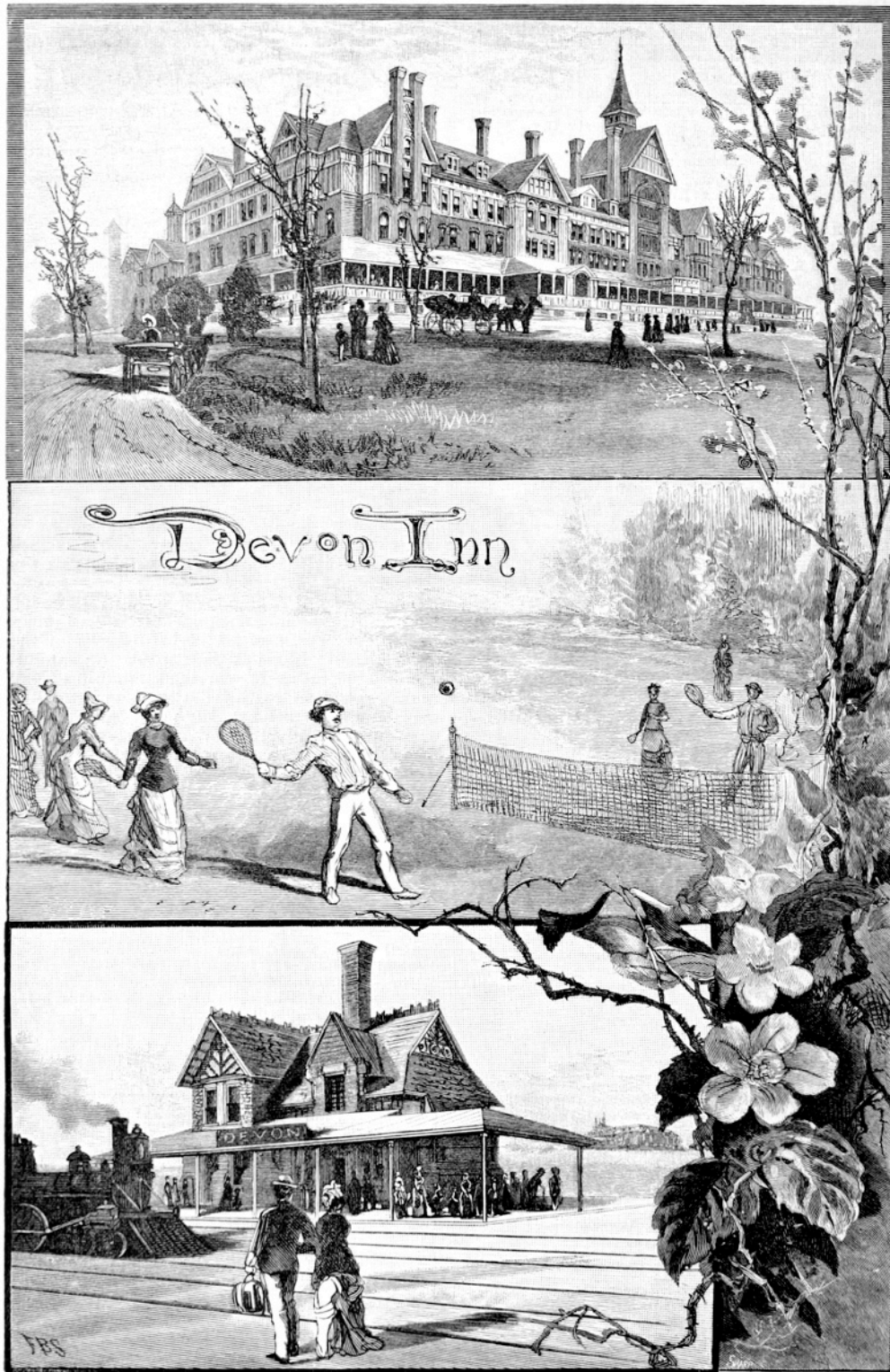


Fig. 2.158: A full page advertising Devon from the 1884 Pennsylvania Railroad Summer Excursion book. (*Summer Excursion Routes Pennsylvania Railroad Co. 1884, 16.*)



Fig. 2.159, 2.160: Two 1880s-'90s views of Devon Station. The small building to the left of the station in the image below was the Devon post office. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)



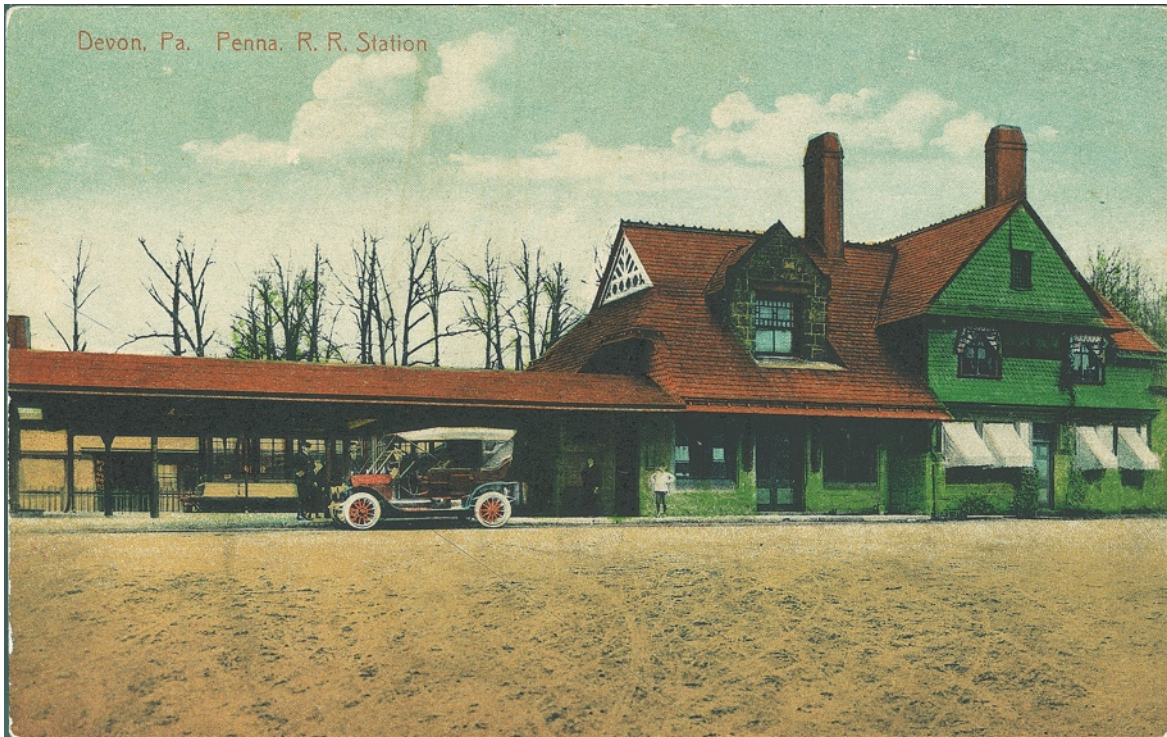


Fig. 2.161, 2.162: Two early 20th century postcards, showing the station (above) and the boulevard leading from the station to the Devon Inn (below). The boulevard provided a clear line of sight directly to the station. (Courtesy of Steve DiAddezio)





Fig. 2.163: A postcard mailed in 1907 to Cape Vincent, NY, shows Devon Station looking southeast from the outbound platform. (Collection of the author)

Fig. 2.164: Devon Station in 2004 showing its unfortunate deterioration. (Courtesy of Lucius Kwok)





Fig. 2.165: The station and outbound shelter looking southwest from the outbound platform. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.166: Devon Station, looking northeast from the south parking lot. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.167: Details in the north gable. These windows were boarded up by SEPTA in early 2011. (Photo by the author, October 15, 2010)

Fig. 2.168: Terra cotta roof cresting and chimney tiles are still visible. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.169: Original ornately cut shingles still adorn the second story façades. (Photo by the author, October 15, 2010)

Fig. 2.170: The waiting room fireplace is still intact, though covered. (Photo by the author, October 15, 2010)





Fig. 2.171, 2.172: The outbound shelter is a standard PRR design. It is in need of repair, though it appears to be structurally sound. (Photos by the author, August 27, 2010)



WAYNE STATION

The town of Wayne was originally a farming area bisected by the Lancaster Turnpike. It was first known as Cleaver's Landing during the early years of the railroad, thanks to a milk platform at the Cleaver farm that constituted the first railroad stop. Wayne remained a sparsely populated area with a few scattered farm houses until the 1860s, when J. Henry Askin decided to build his home there just south of the railroad and north of Lancaster Pike. His mansion, "Louella," was so-named to honor his daughters, Louisa and Ella. It was completed about 1865 in the Second Empire style, with an impressive mansard tower that was Wayne's foremost landmark in its day.

Askin, a real estate broker, wanted to make the town into an ideal community, and he used the "Louella" name for the resulting development. In 1870 he gave funds to erect the Wayne Presbyterian Church, and a year later the Wayne Lyceum Hall was completed. A town hall was located farther east on Lancaster Pike. He began construction of mansard-roofed houses similar to (but smaller than) his own on Bloomingdale Avenue south of the railroad, but the Depression of 1873 ruined his plans to complete his rural utopian community.

Around the time of this first construction boom in 1870, the first real passenger railroad stop was constructed at Louella, on the south side of the tracks near a cornfield. The stop was named "Wayne," after Revolutionary War General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, and around 1880 the town would adopt this name. Originally a simple shed to provide shelter, an adjoining two story cottage for the station agent was later constructed. It was a plain board and batten-clad building with Italianate details, located just to the west of the Louella mansion.

Only a few short years passed before the Italianate station became inadequate. The PRR built a new depot directly to the west of the original station, from a design based on that of the Wilson/Thorn-penned Wynnewood Station, probably in 1873. It was a frame structure with stone foundation, and was unusual for its multitude of Stick style details (see the section on Strafford Station, p. 107, for more on this building). Wayne continued to grow, and after just a few years this newer station also proved to be inadequate; soon Wayne would receive its third station in less than fifteen years.

In 1880, seven years after Askin's grand residential experiment on Bloomingdale Avenue went under, partners Anthony J. Drexel and George W. Childs bought Askin's land, as well as several surrounding farms. Their plan was similar to Askin's, to create an ideal suburb "out in the country," and they realized that the railroad would be the means by which customers would visit and learn about the newly upgraded community. Central to their plan was the Bellevue Hotel, an immense frame structure where every room had a balcony. George Childs put his faith in the Bellevue as host of the 1881 Aztec Club convention, a gathering of Mexican-American War veterans that included Ulysses S. Grant. Hotel patrons were dependent on the railroad, which, though located a fair distance to the west, was accessible via an elevated boardwalk that stood on stilts so that patrons could bypass the muddy streets on their way to the Bellevue.

The hotel was the first part of the Drexel/Childs plan for Wayne, which included summer cottages within walking distance of the station north of the tracks. Before any of these residences could be presentable, the developers knew that Wayne would need a thoroughly modern and handsome new station to welcome potential customers.

The construction of a new Wayne Station coincided with the re-alignment of the railroad, which in Wayne re-located it a few yards to the north of its original path. The PRR realized that the existing Stick style structure could be moved and re-used, but the old Italianate cottage was too large and would have to remain in place. In 1881, the railroad had their architect Washington Bleddyn Powell design a cottage for Wayne Station, to house the station agent. It was of a thoroughly different architecture than the Stick style station, consisting of two and a half stories with half-timbering and some Eastlake details. Powell drew every detail of the proposed cottage, including details of the interior staircase, molding profiles and even how panelling on the doors should be arranged.¹

The PRR, or perhaps Drexel and Childs, decided that they preferred a single station structure, comprised of both a waiting room and dwelling for the station agent. Powell was retained as architect, and he laid out new plans with the same level of detail he gave the proposed cottage a year earlier. On a single sheet, Powell laid out multiple cross-sections, molding details, fireplace and brickwork design, and a number of other items of minutia. Powell's final drawings were completed on November 4th and 6th, 1882, and the PRR signed a construction contract with builder William H. Bilyeu on the 11th. As stated in the contract, the construction was to be completed by March 1, 1883.

That timeline was wishful thinking. One reason for the drawn-out work had to do with Powell and his obsessive attention to detail. In a letter to PRR Chief Engineer William H. Brown dated May 29, 1883, Powell wrote:

¹ Artist unknown, based on designs by Powell, W. Bleddyn. "Dwelling, Wayne Station, Penn R.R." *American Architect and Building News*, August 6, 1881.

Dear Sirs,

It is my unpleasant duty to call your attention to the manner in which the new Station Bldg. at Wayne is being executed. In pursuance of instructions received from you a short time back, I directed the Engineer in charge to its shortcomings with the remark that you desired the work to proceed in accordance with the drawings - but with no avail.

As much as I regret to commit this to writing, I am obliged to ask you to note the following, because should they prove a source of remark, I must claim exemption from responsibility.²

Powell continued by listing four items that, according to him, were not being done according to the drawings supplied to Mr. Bilyeu. Chief Engineer Brown forwarded the letter to William L. Ziegler, Construction Engineer, to which Ziegler responded with a six-page letter dated June 5, 1883. It charged that Mr. Powell's plans were unclear, and that he was slow to respond. Still, the builders were doing everything they could to appease the architect. Ziegler continued:

In addition to the plans being deficient, the specifications also conflict; Mr. Bilyeu having one set and the working set which was furnished us differing from his in several respects... You will readily see with these discrepancies that I have noted, coupled with the fact that Mr. Powell was formerly in the habit of giving instructions to the builder or his foreman over our heads, the difficulty which we have had in keeping things straight.

In conclusion, I would earnestly and respectfully request, that Mr Powells duties be confined to making the plans only; or if it is necessary that he exercise any outside supervision whatever, that he be given sole charge of the building under construction.³

Also in 1883, with the station itself still incomplete, the PRR signed a contract with builders Jones and Benner to build an outbound shelter, extended station canopy roofs and a

² Letter from W. Bleddyn Powell to William H. Brown, May 29, 1883. Collection of the Hagley Museum and Library.

³ Letter from William L. Ziegler to William H. Brown, June 5, 1883. Collection of the Hagley Museum and Library.

walkway under the North Wayne Avenue bridge. The station was finally completed in 1884, and its design finally conformed quite well to Powell's original drawings. The delay of over a year may have been due to Powell's demands, or also because Bilyeu was also contracted to build Devon Station during 1882-3. The new Devon Inn opened in 1883, and the railroad wanted to be sure their new station was operational by then, and as a result, Wayne's completion could have been lower on the list of priorities.

The new station at Wayne was comprised of a high-ceilinged waiting room and stationmaster's cottage together in a single structure, with a brick first story, slate roof, shingled second story gables and a square tower on the track side. A limited number of Stick style elements were found on the tower and the windowless dormer on the building's west side.

Wayne Station was built just in time to see the beginnings of the town's success. Drexel and Childs built the first row of summer cottages along North Wayne Avenue (just minutes from and within sight of Wayne Station) in 1885. In that year the residents of these homes formed the North Wayne Protective Association, considered one of the first neighborhood civic associations in the country. In 1887 home building continued, with several new designs by architects Brown & Day, J.W. Worthington and Frank L. and William L. Price. These large new homes made it clear that Wayne was to become a place for permanent residents rather than summer vacationers. Still, business at the Bellevue Hotel was brisk enough for an addition featuring a high gazebo-like open turret, and Drexel and Childs even enlarged the old Louella mansion built by Askin two decades earlier to become another hotel. The Bellevue burned to the ground in a terrific fire in 1900, but its role was taken over with the construction of the Waynewood Hotel in 1906, a Tudor Revival behemoth that today is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Drexel and Childs took full advantage of the railroad's proximity to North Wayne, which could be seen in all its glory from the railroad's high elevation. Riders of passing trains were able to view the uncharacteristically large home of Dr. George Miles Wells as well as other houses on Walnut Avenue, a bucolic lake along North Wayne Avenue, the sprawling and attractive countryside stretching to the west, and unabashed advertising banners put up by North Wayne's builders Wendell & Smith. By the time North Wayne was complete and its houses were sold, the Wayne name was so well-known that Drexel and Childs could build the neighborhood of South Wayne without the need to advertise from the railroad. The new development, on the south side of Lancaster Pike, had larger homes designed primarily by the Price Brothers and Horace Trumbauer. Wendell & Smith were retained, and around the same time they began construction of Overbrook Farms, a similar development surrounding Overbrook Station at the edge of the Philadelphia city limits.

The two older Wayne Stations no longer fronted the re-aligned railroad. While the ornate Stick style Wayne Station of 1873 was put on a train car and re-used a mile west in Strafford when the new station was complete in 1884, the older Italianate station and cottage remained in place until the early 1950s. It became part of the Waynewood Hotel property, and was used by the hotel as a dormitory for waiters. A photograph from 1930 shows the building looking much as it did in the 1870 photograph (fig. 2.173), except for some cobbled-together additions and abandoned cars sitting in front of it (see fig. 2.174). It is remarkable that the building lasted for as long as it did, though it was eventually consumed by the need for more parking spaces in downtown Wayne.

The handsome 1882-4 Wayne Station served the town well during its early development. The station agent lived comfortably in the building, which contained a living room, kitchen, and three upstairs bedrooms. A fenced-in yard adjoined the building to the east. As Wayne grew and the station became busier, the railroad received complaints about the limited size of the station's single waiting room. In a letter dated April 14, 1890, Robert E. Pettit, PRR General Superintendent, wrote to General Manager Charles E. Pugh:

Dear Sir: -

Our Passenger Station at Wayne has but one waiting room for ladies, gentlemen, mechanics, laborers, &c. There has been so much complaint that Mr. Gucker has had plan worked up for remodeling and adding a second waiting room; as also ticket office and baggage [sic] room, as per blue print herewith. The present structure [see print herewith] was erected by the Chief Engineer, and I should think he would be able to have some plan prepared by which the additional room would be secured at less than the \$6000 estimated by Mr. Gucker. Will you kindly have him take the question up, using perhaps the plan already prepared as an indication of what is wanted.⁴

The PRR consented to the addition of more waiting room space, and decided to claim the first floor of the agent's residence as part of this expansion, with an eastward addition adding even more room. The waiting room's high ceiling, with its decorative molding, was extended into the new additions, taking up the bottom half of the former second story of the cottage section. Except for a barely noticeable change in the molding, the transition from old to new halves of the waiting room is seamless. Restrooms were relocated to former closet space behind the bay window at the southern front of the building. The windows formerly of the second story bedrooms, found in the south gable, now acted as skylights high above the bathroom stalls. The nearly identical gable on the east façade was then removed for the new addition, which included

⁴ Letter from Robert E. Pettit to Charles E. Pugh, April 14, 1890. Collection of the Hagley Museum and Library.

a windowless dormer with Stick style elements designed to mirror the dormer on the west end. The addition, and smaller modifications, were executed with such precision that a casual viewer would be hard pressed to see that any change had taken place. The brickwork, for example, was reproduced meticulously, even replicating the very thin pink-tinted mortar layers. A course of egg-and-dart patterned terra cotta was also copied on the new addition, although the exact pattern was apparently unavailable. This difference remains the only obvious indication that the building was constructed in stages.

Across the tracks was the 1883 outbound shelter. It had an enclosed portion that was heated in the winter, and a hipped roof that reflected the canopy of the station. It soon proved much too small for the growing town, and within a few years it was replaced with a new canopy of a more standard design that was probably the longest on the entire Main Line. After more than 50 years, this structure was trimmed to three quarters of its original size. Other railroad structures surrounding Wayne Station included two freight buildings, one on the western end of the outbound shelter, and the other to the east of the station. The latter was built in 1884 by Wendell & Smith, just before the firm built their first North Wayne cottages. A Union News Company stand stood to the west of the station. It was an unusually ornate little building, with stained glass windows and a delicate miniature balustrade around its roof. Throughout the 20th century, the two freight stations and the newsstand disappeared, leaving just the station and the shortened outbound shelter.

The condition of Wayne Station languished through the second half of the 20th century. Although the ticket office and waiting room remained open for business, the building's windows

were covered and its wood double doors were replaced with metal doors containing tiny square wire-glass windows. Peeling paint was the station's most visually evident sign of aging.

More than once, Wayne residents took things into their own hands. In July, 1986, the civic associations of North and South Wayne came together to choose new colors to paint the rapidly deteriorating station. SEPTA agreed to pay for the paint job, and Roger Moss, historian from the Philadelphia Athenæum, advised on proper Victorian colors. Among those helping in the effort was Radnor's then-First Ward Commissioner, James C. Higgins.⁵

Repainting alone could not save Wayne Station and its outbound shelter from deterioration, and it was clear that SEPTA lacked the funds and will to properly restore either. In September 1996, the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association was formed with the goals to "have the station placed on the National Register and to raise adequate funds from public and private sources to prevent the station from being lost to rot and deterioration."⁶ Jim Higgins, who had helped in the repainting effort ten years before, was the Association's president.

The nomination for the National Register was prepared by George E. Thomas Associates of Philadelphia. The nomination asserted that the building fit within criteria A (association with historic events), B (association with significant persons) and C (architectural significance). The significant person specified on the form was Joseph M. Wilson, one of the supposed architects of the building according to Thomas.

The organization had raised \$130,000 by August of 1999. Funds came from grants and fund raising efforts including a "buy a brick" program and the sale of scale lighted reproductions of the building. Repairs commenced, including the reconstruction of a roof shelter at the base of

⁵ Cooper, Helen. "SEPTA Brushes Wayne Station." *Suburban and Wayne Times*, July 10, 1986, 1.

⁶ WSHPA press release, August 9, 1999.

the outbound shelter adjoining the north parking lot, installation of reproduction double doors (replacing the metal doors of the '90s), and removal of boards to reveal the building's original multi-paned windows, which were completely repaired.

In 1997 the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission recommended National Register of Historic Places eligibility for Wayne Station, and on June 21, 1999, the station was placed on the Register. In February 1998, the Station Café and Juice Bar opened at the west end of the waiting room. Colin Mattis was the operator of the café, and put about \$50,000 into interior renovations.⁷ The café won a coveted “Best of Philly” award in 1998.

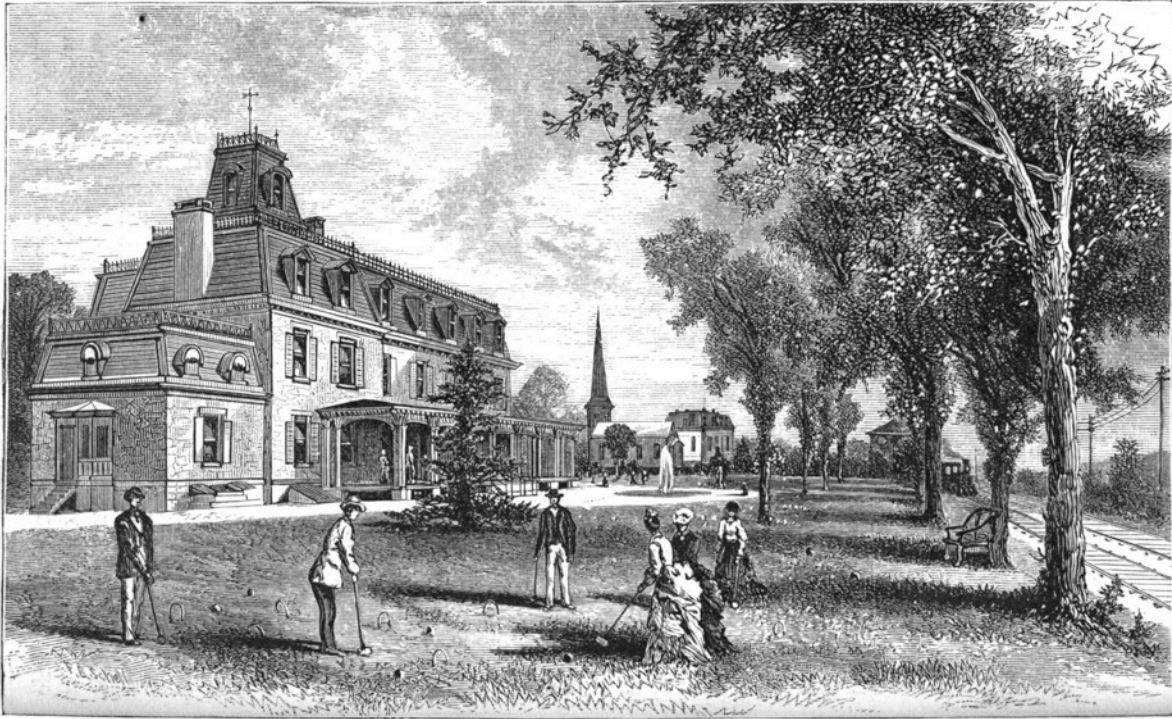
The Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association's work, and the 2008-10 renovation of Wayne Station will be thoroughly discussed in chapter four.

⁷ Cooper, Helen. “A Stop on the Rails of History... Wayne Station Becomes a National Landmark.” *Suburban and Wayne Times*, November 11, 1999, 9-A.



Fig. 2.173: Wayne Station in the 1870s, looking south. The property had a cornfield on the other side of the tracks. (Photo by Frederick Gutekunst, from the Louella Album, Radnor Historical Society)
 Fig. 2.174: The building remained standing for years after the relocation of the railroad. This photograph was taken at the same angle as the one above, in 1930. (Radnor Historical Society)





"LOUELLA"—RESIDENCE OF MR. J. HENRY ASKIN, WAYNE STATION.

Fig. 2.175: F.E. Schell engraving of the rear of J. Henry Askin's Louella, showing its close proximity to the railroad. In the distance are the Wayne Presbyterian Church steeple and the Wayne Opera House. (*Suburban Stations and Rural Homes on the Pennsylvania Railroad*)

Fig. 2.176: W.B. Powell's design for a station agent's dwelling at Wayne Station, designed before the PRR decided to build a combined station/cottage. (*American Architect & Building News*, August 6, 1881.)

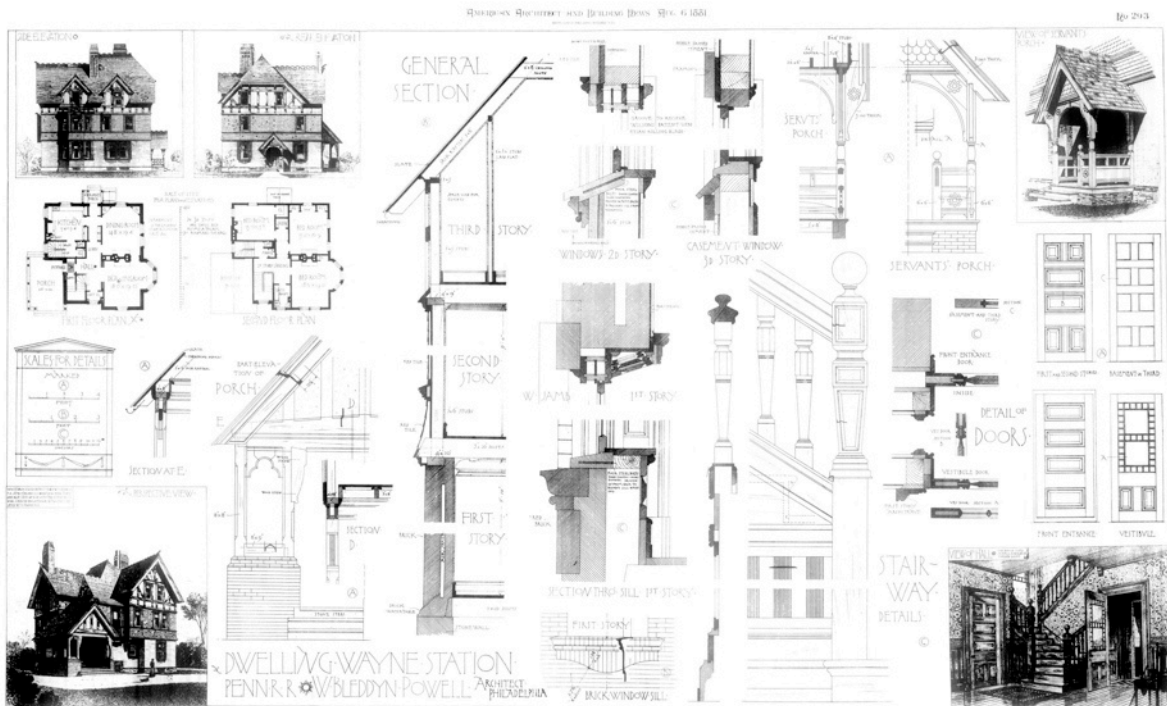
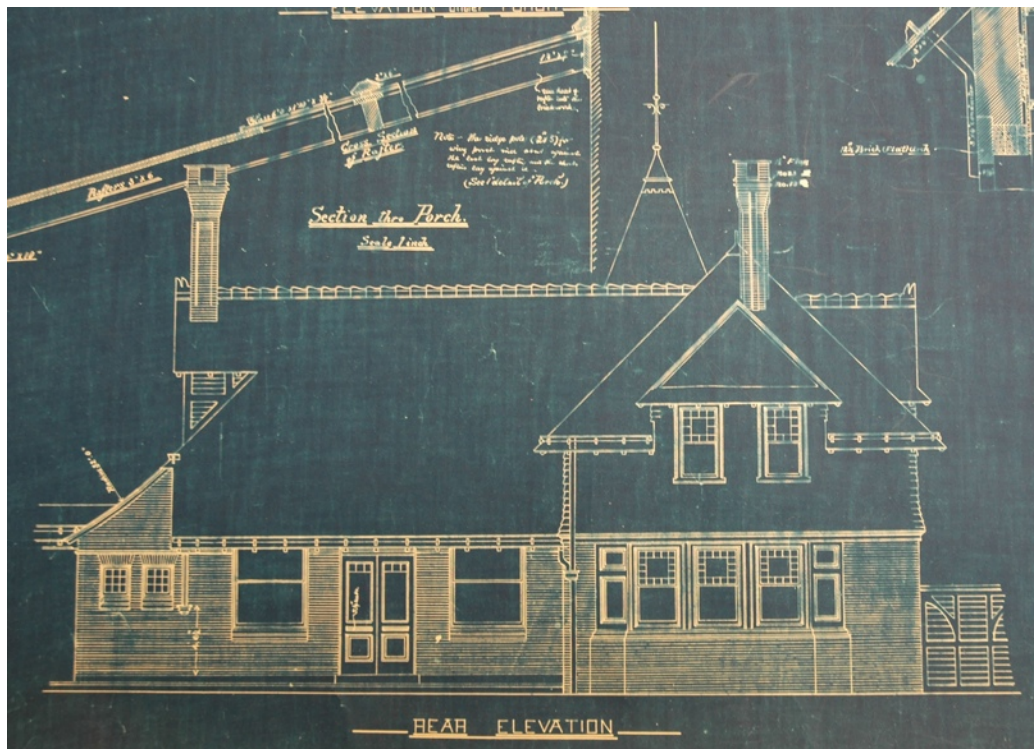
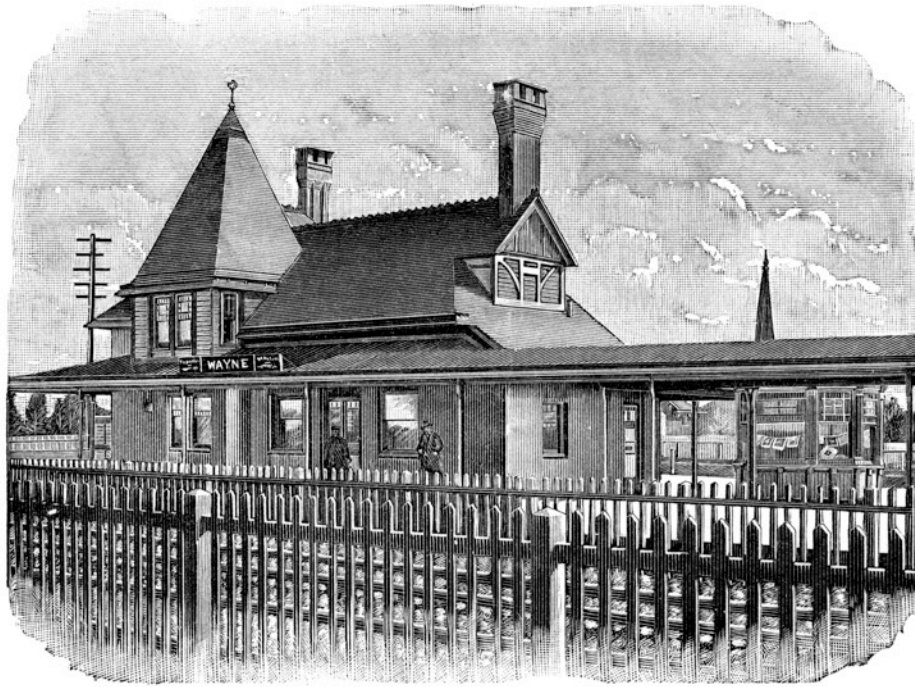




Fig. 2.177: Perspective view that accompanied the Dwelling page in the *American Architect*. Aspects of both Wayne and Devon Stations are discernible from this early design. (*American Architect & Building News*, August 6, 1881.)

Fig. 2.178: One of the blueprint elevations of Wayne Station from a drawing dated November 6, 1882, probably drawn by Washington Bleddyn Powell. (J. William Shaw archive, Winterthur Museum)





WAYNE STATION.

Fig. 2.179: An engraving of Wayne Station that was printed in multiple publications. (*Wayne Signal* newspaper, Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.180: Early photograph of Wayne Station showing the Union News Company stand in the center of the image. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.181: A cropping of the only known photograph showing the original east façade of Wayne Station. (George Schultz photo album, Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.182: An official Pennsylvania Railroad photograph by William Rau of Wayne Station in 1890s. (*On the Main Line*, 25.)





Fig. 2.183: A postcard, postmarked 1911, shows the east end of the station following modifications. (Collection of the author)

Fig. 2.184: Postcard, postmarked 1912, shows the station and its various outbuildings and no less than three trains. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.185, 2.186: Two 1940s-era photographs of Wayne Station's long outbound shelter. The shelter's three westernmost sections were later removed. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.187, 2.188: Two photographs of the station in 1969 show its “reverse” paint scheme, of dark maroon and white. (Collection of the author)

Fig. 2.189: The station in a photograph dated December 17, 1970, at the time of a railroad strike. (*Suburban and Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.190: The station in 1983. (*Suburban and Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.191: Wayne Station just before its first significant renovations. (Photo by the author, October 22, 2002)



PAOLI STATION

The one station whose name is most synonymous with the Main Line's railroad heritage is Paoli. The commuter train to and from Philadelphia has been known as the "Paoli Local" almost since the beginning, as Paoli was for years the terminus of local operation. Even today, the line is known as the "Paoli/Thorndale Line" (Thorndale is a station 15.3 miles west of Paoli that is the terminus of some of today's commuter trains). Until the late 20th century, Paoli was also location of a large rail yard, the "home" to the Pennsylvania Railroad, Conrail and SEPTA commuter trains, including the MP54 and various series of Silverliners.

Besides the Paoli Local, the town is also known as the namesake of the Revolutionary War Battle of Paoli (which took place in what is now Malvern). Commonly referred to as the "Paoli Massacre," 53 American soldiers and four British soldiers were killed in the altercation. Involved in the battle was General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, for whom the nearby town of Wayne was named.

The name Paoli is derived, as so many towns in the area were, from the old tavern there. During its opening in 1769, a toast was made to Corsican General Pasquali Paoli, and as a result owner Joshua Evans named his establishment the "General Paoli." The location of the inn was well-chosen, as in 1794 the Lancaster Turnpike was built just south of the building, and in 1832 the nearby Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad brought even more traffic. Joshua Evans Jr., who took over the business from his father, was a member of the United States Congress; it is possible that his political influence led to the railroad's route running past his tavern.¹ The inn

¹ Twaddell, Meg Daly. "Tales of Local Taverns." *Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society History Quarterly*. April, 1985. 43.

stood at the northwest corner of what is now Lancaster Avenue and North Valley Road, within sight of today's Paoli Station.

Since the beginning of operations on the Philadelphia & Columbia, Paoli was an important stop. In 1864, the Pennsylvania Railroad established a single round trip rate for Paoli commuters, inaugurating the "Paoli Local." Four years later, the railroad began promoting summer picnic excursions to Paoli for city dwellers. Not much is known about the early post-tavern station(s) at Paoli, but the railroad constructed a new station there at the end of the 19th century to coincide with their track realignment project.

The location of the new tracks at Paoli was through an existing hill east of Chester Valley Road (now North Valley Road). A trench was simply dug out of the hill to accommodate the four tracks of the railroad, and the station was placed on the south hill overlooking the tracks (see figs. 2.192, 2.193). On the north hill, a canopy with stairs led down to the outbound platform. William H. Burns, of Berwyn, was the builder. The PRR construction contract with Burns was signed June 18, 1883, with work to be finished by August 31 of that year.²

The station building at Paoli was unique to the line, but not to the railroad as a whole. An identical station was built at Bala, Pa. on the PRR's Schuylkill Valley Division, which operated concurrently to the Main Line in Lower Merion Township near City Line Avenue. The design was a simple side-gabled plan with a shed dormer facing the tracks and a gable dormer on the south face. Protruding above the south dormer was an unusual pair of connected chimneys (see fig. 2.196). Despite being a small building, Paoli Station appeared majestic atop its hill, surrounded by a well-kept stepped lawn. Although Washington Bleddyn Powell signed the

² PRR construction contract with William H. Burns. Collection of the Hagley Museum and Library.

construction contract, Wilson Brothers & Company took credit for the design in their book “Catalogue of Work Executed.”³ The architect for this standard design is, for now, unknown.

The railroad built their standard roof canopies over most station platforms around the 1890s, and Paoli was no exception. The canopy on the south side nearly obscured the entire station when viewed from the tracks (see figs. 2.194, 2.195). An ornate Union News Company stand stood to the west of the station when it was new (see fig. 2.193). Other structures surrounding the station have included a water tower, freight buildings, a Railway Express Agency building, and a signal tower, identical to the tower found at Bryn Mawr (see figs. 2.204, 2.205). In 1933, the platforms at Paoli Station were enlarged to accommodate longer trains.⁴

A significant tragedy occurred at Paoli Station on September 25, 1905. Local traffic had coexisted with express traffic for decades, until a New York Limited headed for the new Pennsylvania Station in New York City rear-ended an eastbound local train. Five passengers, all railroad officials, were killed, and 20 others were injured.⁵

In May of 1952, the Pennsylvania Railroad board approved the construction of a new station at Paoli. The project would not just involve construction of new station structures, but also leveling the hill on which the old station sat. This would create an even plane from the railroad south to a new, larger parking lot, and to the ever-busier Lancaster Avenue. By 1953, a new tan brick, flat roofed, utilitarian station was built. A smaller structure of similar form and materials was built on the north side of the tracks with ticket offices but no passenger waiting rooms. Two much smaller open shelters were built at the extreme east end of the platform on

³ Wilson Brothers & Co. *Catalogue of Work Executed*, 12.

⁴ Baer, Chris. “PRR Chronology.”

⁵ Baer, Chris. “PRR Chronology.”

either side of the tracks. These small buildings and the north platform building are distinguishable by their projecting concrete roofs that gently slope to the rear (see fig. 2.203). The projecting roofs of these structures resemble the mid-century PRR station designs of Lester Tichy, architect from the office of Raymond Loewy. Despite design similarities, there is no evidence known to suggest that Tichy or anyone else from the Loewy office designed the buildings at Paoli. Incredibly, the late 19th century-era roof canopy leading from the north parking lot and down stairs to the outbound platform was left in place to link with the 1953 building below, and still remains to this day (see figs. 2.201, 2.202).

Just west of the station and over North Valley Road were the Paoli rail yards and shops. Appearing on maps dating back to the late 19th century, the yards were logically found here, the original terminus of the Main Line. The yard was home only to local trains, including MP54s and Silverliners. After abandonment, the 28-acre site was subject of a superfund cleanup supervised by the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1980s and '90s, which cost \$20 million.⁶

With the clearing of the Paoli rail yard site and the continued aging of the current Paoli Station, SEPTA and Amtrak (which itself uses Paoli as one of its only suburban stops) plan on building a new Paoli Transportation on the former rail yard site. The proposed development will include not only transportation facilities for Amtrak express train service, SEPTA local train service, and SEPTA bus service, but also retail and housing. In 2009 Amtrak selected Strategic Realty Investments as the developer of the site. The long-term project is projected to take 10-15

⁶ Terruso, Julia. "Paoli rail yard solar project gets \$1 million from state." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 22, 2010. http://articles.philly.com/2010-06-22/news/24966660_1_rail-yard-panels-superfund-site

years and cost \$500 million.⁷ In June, 2010, the state of Pennsylvania gave \$1 million towards a three-acre solar panel field on the old rail yard site, which will power the operation of trains on the Paoli/Thorndale line.⁸

Today's Paoli Station is a work of modern simplicity, but it has lacked the upkeep it desperately needs. The canopy roof of the south platform has deteriorated to reveal its framework (see fig.2.200). The old ticket office building on the north side has been disused for decades, and is a target for graffiti. The 19th century canopy that links this building to the north parking lot is falling to pieces. Beyond the waiting areas, Paoli's signal tower bordering the old rail yards is deteriorating beyond the condition of Bryn Mawr's tower (see fig. 2.205). Its curved track-facing oriel window was sheared off years ago (supposedly in an accident), and was never replaced.

The deplorable condition of all of the structures at Paoli points to the need for change which, as is currently planned, does not involve any of the existing structures. Due to their consistent lack of upkeep and unattractive appearance, it could be said that they are not worth saving. However, the signal tower west of the station is another story. Currently unused, the tower is on the southern edge of the former rail yard site, approximately where the new passenger station is to be constructed. Ideally, the building could be integrated with the new station to represent the last piece of the historic Paoli railroad operations. Whatever happens, in the coming years Paoli Station will see more change than any other stop on the Main Line.

⁷ Kostelni, Natalie. "Strategic Realty Investments developing plan for Paoli rail yard." *Philadelphia Business Journal*, December 28, 2009. http://www.bizjournals.com/philadelphia/blogs/real_estate/2009/12/strategic_realty_investments_developing_plan_for_paoli_rail_yards.html

⁸ Terruso.



Fig. 2.192: Official PRR photograph by William H. Rau of Paoli Station, ca. 1890s. When new, the station and grounds were extremely well cared for. (From *On the Main Line*, 32.)

Fig. 2.193: A rare glass plate negative shows Paoli Station near the beginning of its life. To the right is the ornate Union News Company stand. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.194, 2.195: These two views of Paoli Station, taken from the north platform, show how the ca. 1890s platform canopy and hill (seen here with stone retaining wall) put commuters in a shadowy canyon. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)





Fig. 2.196: The view of Paoli Station looking northeast, from what would become the parking lot. The building acted as residence for railroad employees. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)

Fig. 2.197: The railroad evened the ground and built a new Paoli Station in 1953. (Hagley Museum and Library; and Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society)





Fig. 2.198: A view of Silverliners at Paoli rail yard, near the end of the yard's operation in the 1980s. (*Suburban and Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.199: Paoli Station today, looking southeast from the north platform. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.200: A SEPTA local train pulls out of Paoli in 2010. Passengers must endure inconveniences like uncovered platforms. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.201: At the north parking lot, passengers enter the platform via a ca. 1890-era covering, which connects with the 1953 structure below. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.202: A view looking north of the old roof connecting with the 1953 building below. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.203: At the east end of the platform (on both the north and south sides of the tracks) are these small passenger shelters, which are now both sitting unused. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 2.204: Paoli's switch tower was damaged in a freight accident in the mid-20th century. The damaged wall was repaired, and the tower kept in service. (Courtesy of John P. Hemcher & Philip E. Hemcher)

Fig. 2.205: The Paoli tower today, located west of the station at the south edge of the old rail yard site. An earlier accident sheared off its curved second story oriel window. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



ST. DAVIDS STATION

The first station at St. Davids was called “East Wayne,” according to the 1881 railroad atlas. It was likely not in existence for very long before the atlas published; Wayne itself was just beginning development at the time, and the area east of the downtown was especially unpopulated. The original station consisted of a single-room shed, with Stick style details and a cross-timber pattern resembling a less ornate Strafford Station (see figs. 2.206, 2.207). “East Wayne” eventually evolved into “St. David’s” (later losing the apostrophe), taking its name from the historic Old St. David’s Church, a popular tourist destination nearby. The name was really just a real estate gimmick for the housing development there, as both Strafford and Wayne Stations are closer to the old church.

The housing development at St. Davids continued to grow through the 1880s and ‘90s, with many large homes and grand estates popping up on the landscape. Wendell & Smith, the building firm in charge of construction, established their office on Chamounix Road, just across from St. Davids Station. Evidently they built on that location to attract visitors from the city as they departed their trains. As the town rose from the landscape, St. Davids outgrew its one-room train station. The PRR contracted William H. Burns, of Berwyn, to build the new station at St. Davids. The construction contract was signed on September 13, 1890, and work was to be complete by December 15 of that year at a cost of \$6,150.00.¹

This new station’s design had already been built at Homewood, the Pennsylvania Railroad’s first stop inside the eastern boundary of Pittsburgh (see fig. 3.1). Itself a variant of

¹ Construction contract from the PRR archive at the Hagley Museum and Library.

Devon Station's architecture, the design featured Tudor Revival and Romanesque details. The layout, if not aesthetics, also closely resembled that of Wayne, the next depot to the west. Within a few years of St. Davids Station's construction, Rosemont Station was built three stops to the east using the same design.

Around the time that Merion Station was built, the late 1910s, St. Davids Station was given a detached outbuilding (possibly a post office) with a stucco and brick façade matching that of Merion's depot and outbuildings (see fig. 2.116). Presumably at the same time, the station was given a new inbound shelter adjoining the depot, with thick metal columns and arts and crafts details almost identical to those at Merion.

In the 1960s, the railroad decided to replace the station building. Photos from 1966 show a structure that had deteriorated somewhat, although it does not appear to have been unsalvageable (see figs. 2.213-2.217). The station was demolished that year, and replaced either then or sometime later by a nondescript building of a rectangular plan. This building remains, and rather than acting as a waiting room, it is now used as a realtor's office (see fig. 2.219).

Though the historic station was demolished, the historic canopies on either side of the tracks were left to provide shelter for commuters. The inbound shelter is the one resembling the shelters at Merion Station, and the outbound shelter is a standard Pennsylvania Railroad shelter dating from probably the 1880s or '90s. Some of the latter canopy's turned columns and curved brackets have been replaced with more utilitarian supports (see fig. 2.221), but in general this structure retains much of its integrity. Its trackside gable contains gryphon cut-outs (standard PRR designs) that are partially missing (see fig. 2.222). The inbound canopy was built sturdily, and remains in good shape, despite being disembodied from the station it once adjoined.



Fig. 2.206, 2.207: These ca. 1880s views show the original station at St. Davids, which was a simple frame shed. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.208, 2.208a: This ca. 1890 photograph of the toll gate on Lancaster Avenue (foreground) captured, perhaps inadvertently, St. Davids Station under construction (upper right). The Wendell & Smith real estate office (upper left) is also visible. An enlargement (below) shows details of the construction, as well as the older one-room station to the right of the new one, awaiting its demise. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.209, 2.210: Two ca. 1890-1900 views of St. Davids Station, looking west (above) and east (below).
(Radnor Historical Society)



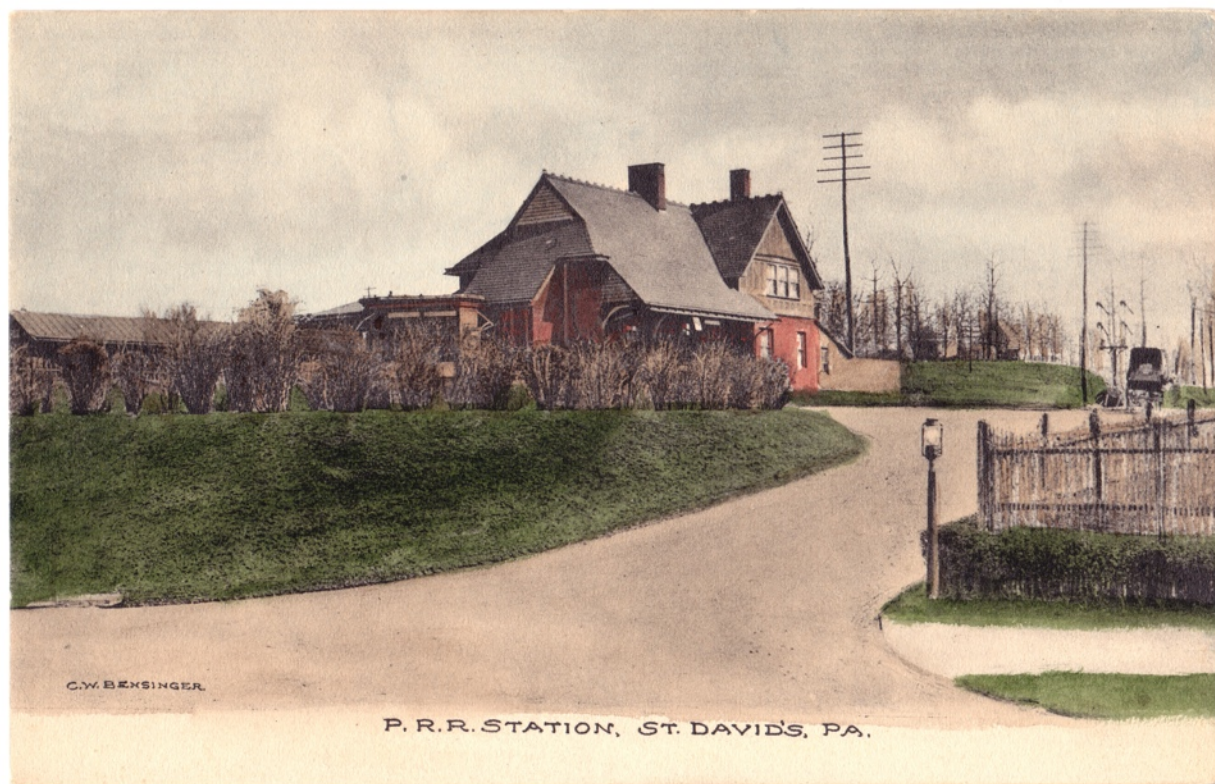


Fig. 2.211: A hand-colored postcard of St. Davids Station, sold by C.W. Bensinger, published ca. 1905-1915. (Collection of the author)

Fig. 2.212: A view of the station and its outbuildings, looking east, ca. 1900. (Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.213, 2.214: These photographs of St. Davids Station's track side (north façade) were taken in 1966, perhaps in anticipation of its impending demolition. They show a building in disrepair, but seemingly not unsalvageable. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.215, 2.216: These Spring, 1966 views of the station's south façade show ramshackle additions, as well as detached post office building, which resembles Merion Station's architecture. (Collection of the author)





Fig. 2.217: A newspaper photograph that was accompanied by a caption announcing the building's impending demolition. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.218: Another newspaper photograph shows the brick pattern of the station's outbound platform, and its unfortunate condition, in the 1970s or '80s. (*Suburban & Wayne Times* archive, Radnor Historical Society)





Fig. 2.219: The new building at St. Davids Station, which does not include a waiting room, in 2010.

(Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.220: Historic fencing is still present, but not always in the best condition. (Photo by the author, April 14, 2007)





Fig. 2.221: The outbound shelter has lost some of its original columns and brackets. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 2.222: Most of the shelter's ornate woodwork is still intact. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



ROSEMONT STATION

The station at Rosemont had a contentious beginning, underwent massive alterations, and despite this eventful life stands today as one of the best maintained Main Line stations. It is believed to be the third depot to bear the name “Rosemont,” the first having been located on the Lancaster Turnpike at the western end of the Bryn Mawr cutoff. Originally called West Haverford, the station was allegedly renamed after the adjoining estate of a Mr. Ashbridge.¹ Once the railroad was re-aligned in 1869-70 and the first Rosemont Station was no longer located on the present route, a new depot was built slightly to the west. This station was on ground donated for the purpose by William Miles, according to a deed dated January 8, 1871, and was given under the condition that it be used only for a station.

Rosemont Station was one of the only Main Line stations to lack an underpass to allow for either vehicular or pedestrian traffic. This unusual omission was due to the elevation of the ground; Rosemont Station happened to be level with surrounding land. Directly across the railroad, a residential street called Rosemont Avenue had been built in the 1880s. The PRR considered creating an underpass continuing this road south beneath the tracks, but eventually abandoned those plans in favor of building a new station a block to the west. There a different road named Wendover Avenue (today’s Airdale Road) was extended south to create an underpass, and continue south to Lancaster Avenue.

Several prominent individuals called Rosemont home, and in 1891 began collecting subscriptions to ensure the quality of the new Rosemont Station and its underpass. The

¹ *Triumph III*, 185.

subscribers were to have a stake in the station, and thus the railroad would have lost some control over it. The subscribers requested a new depot to be built of stone, similar to Devon. What they ended up getting was a station nearly identical in scale and design to Devon, but made of brick with Tudor-style elements (a standard design also built a year earlier in St. Davids).

The PRR signed a construction contract for Rosemont Station on November 18, 1891, hiring William H. Burns of Berwyn (who had built the identical station at St. Davids). The work was to be completed by February 1, 1892. On May 7, 1892, John H. Converse, the owner of the large “Chetwynd” estate south of Rosemont Station, submitted a list of subscribers to PRR Chief Engineer William H. Brown. Converse was president of the Baldwin Locomotive Works, and each of the four other men listed (who gave between \$100 and \$500 as subscriptions) were high-ranking Baldwin officials. They made up the bulk of all subscribers.

Being reminded of the covenants placed upon the property housing the previous Rosemont Station (some dispute arose when its re-location was announced), Chief Engineer William H. Brown evidently decided that the railroad would be better off without subscribers, and requested that their money be returned. Not all of the subscribers were happy with the result, and were only too happy to get their money back. Joseph F. Sinnott, co-owner of Moore & Sinnott, one of the largest distilleries in the United States, sent this letter to Brown:

Philada. May 20th. 1892.

Dear Sir:-

In reply to your recent letter I would state that I shall take pleasure in remitting you the amount of my subscription to the Rosemont undergrade bridge and station as soon as they are ready for use.

In this connection permit me to say that I consider the station is totally inadequate to the requirements of the neighborhood and is in my opinion a disgrace to your great corporation.

Very respectfully,
Joseph F. Sinnott

Brown kept PRR president Roberts up to date with the situation:

May 25, 1892

Dear Sir:-

We have collected from the subscribers to the improvements at Rosemont \$2,200. which we have remitted to the Treasurer. These people subscribed to this with the understanding that they were to have a stone station something like Devon, but as we never received any instructions to build a station of this kind at that point, we put up one of our standard stations like St. Davids, and also built the undergrade arch just west of the station. This arch was authorized on the C.& E.List for 1891 at \$15,000., including the repaving of the road ...

...The shelter station and platform will be to move [sic] from the old location to the new, but when this is done we will still be within the amount authorized on the C.& E.List, and I would recommend that we do not accept this money from these people, as I believe they intend to open some roads and make some improvements there at their own expense, and you will remember that we had considerable difficulty with the old station at Rosemont, on account of the parties who lived in the immediate neighborhood contributing a part of the purchase money when it was bought for that purpose, and we have been obliged to bond the old station lot in order to keep possession of it on this account, and I would not recommend giving a community any hold whatever on any of our new stations or grounds.

By direction of the General Manager we sent letters to all of these subscribers and some half dozen of them have paid and 2 or 3 have refused.

Respectfully,

Wm. H. Brown
Chief Engineer

Alexander J. Cassatt got in on the discussion as well, sending a handwritten letter (some of it illegible) on Cheswold stationery to President Roberts that was enclosed with Brown's letter:

May 26, 1892

My dear Mr. Roberts

A couple of years or more ago, certain residents of Rosemont and vicinity, anxious to have improved station accommodations agreed to subscribe a sum (I think five or six thousand dollars) toward the cost of a new building with a tunnel connecting the two sides of the road. The station has now been nearly completed, and I heard the other day, accidentally, that Mr. Brown had called on the subscribers to pay the amount of the subscription.

I wish to suggest for your consideration the expediency of relieving the subscribers from their obligations - Rosemont is a very important local station,

and the business of there is ... growing - the station accommodations as now provided are not any greater or better than the requirements of the plan demand - nor any better than those at other stations where the residents contributed nothing - Under the circumstances it does not seem to me that the Pennsylvania R.R. Company ought to ask any one to help them to pay for necessary improvements.

If the residents near an important station should want station accommodations better than common, ... provided at other like stations, it would seem to me perfectly proper to ask them to ... to pay for ... - but that is not the case here.

I only offer this as a suggestion, but that is the way it strikes me, and I thought I ought to say so to you.

Very sincerely yours,
A.J. Cassatt

President Roberts agreed with the recommendations of Cassatt and Brown.

I approve of Mr. Brown's suggestion that we do not accept any money from subscribers for the building of a station at Rosemont. If my memory served me rightly, I think it was suggested that subscriptions should be made for the purpose of building an undergrade crossing when we might have accepted the same.

G.B. Roberts
President

From that point forward, Rosemont Station was wholly owned by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and never during its operation was beholden to subscribers.

Despite its tumultuous beginnings, Rosemont Station soon operated like any other on the Main Line. Early in its life, it was given an east addition that closely matched the original architecture (see fig. 2.224).

In 1984, Malvern-based builder John J. Shields Jr. saw opportunity in Rosemont Station, and began a process of transforming the depot into an office rental space. Investors spent \$400,000 on the project, which commenced after two years of negotiations with SEPTA and Amtrak.² The result was a reinvented Rosemont Station; the basic form of the building's

² O'Neill, Robert F. "Old Train Stations on Right Track." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 22, 1993.

architecture was left intact, though details were altered. The track-facing gable was enlarged and given a larger picture window to span what was once two window openings (see fig. 2.226). The south gable was altered with a large semicircular window (see fig. 2.228). The original Tudor Revival façade was reincarnated somewhat, with timbers radiating out of the semicircular window. A large extension to the south elevation of the station added more space for offices. A roof clad in wood shingles included skylight openings.

Rosemont's PRR-standard outbound shelter had become quite dilapidated by 1991, when vandals threw a bench through one of its walls, taking down part of the structure. SEPTA then felt obligated to finish it off.³ It was later replaced with a metal-frame shelter with opaque fiberglass panels (see fig. 2.230).

Although a significant amount of Rosemont Station's historic integrity was lost in the 1980s renovation, and its scale and use was altered greatly, today the building is one of the best maintained depots on the Main Line. This can be partly attributed to its comparatively new materials, but also because it remains in constant use. The Prudential Fox & Roach office that has operated in the station since the renovation has reason to keep its appearance favorable for its customers. As a result, the tenants have a sense of pride and ownership for the station.

The location is well-known and easily identified. In 1993, Helen Gleason, manager of the then-Fox & Roach realtor's office, told a reporter, "we just tell prospective clients to come to the Rosemont railroad station, and they know exactly where we are." At the time, the realtors' business cards didn't even list an address, just "Rosemont Station."⁴ This visibility and

³ Gordon, Suzanne. "Vandalism Finishes Off Train Shed; SEPTA Will Try to Replace Bench." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 28, 1991, M03.

⁴ O'Neill, Robert F. "Old Train Stations on Right Track." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 22, 1993.

recognizability is a unique and valuable feature that each Main Line station has in its respective community, and the business success of Rosemont Station should be a lesson for other stations.



Fig. 2.223: Rosemont Station as depicted in a ca. 1905 postcard. (Radnor Historical Society)
 Fig. 2.224: View of the station in 1949 shows the east addition (at left). (Courtesy of Ted Xaras)

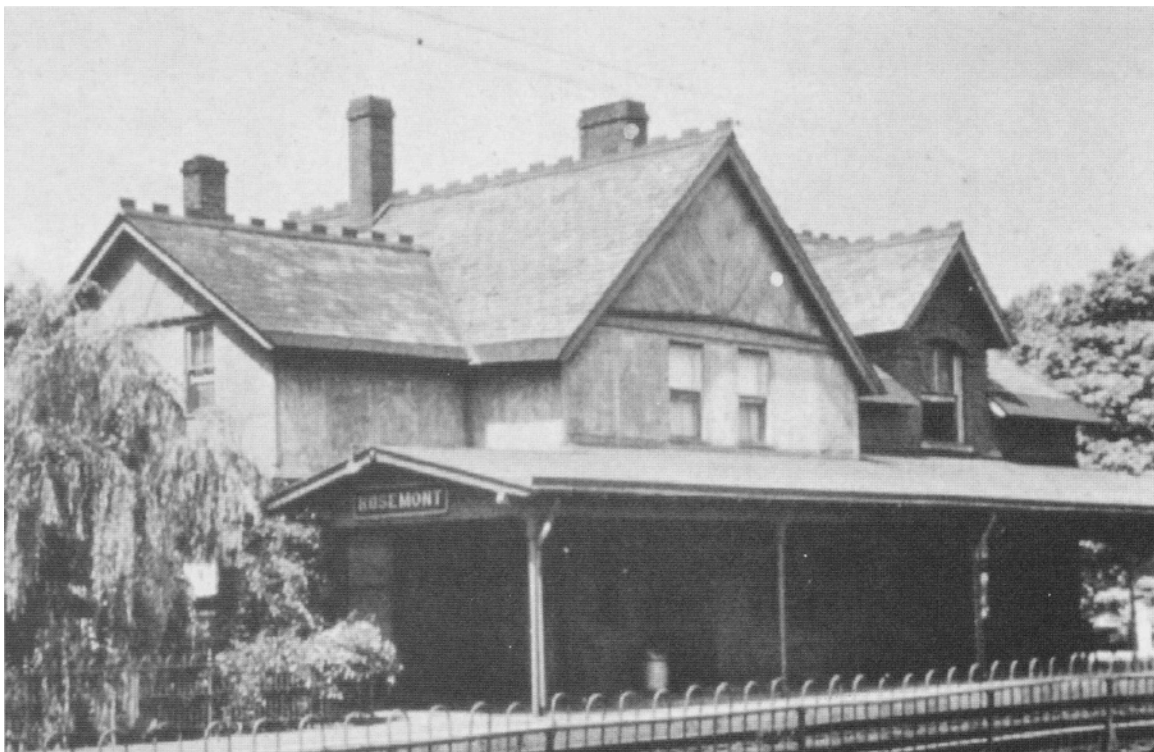




Fig. 2.225: Rosemont's post office was located in this building just west of the station, the roof canopy of which enters the frame in the upper right corner. (Temple University Urban Archives)

Fig. 2.226: Rosemont Station's north façade today shows massive alterations. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.227: View of the station from the outbound platform, looking southeast. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.228: The station's south side has seen the most substantial alterations. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.229: Although most of the station was thoroughly renovated in the 1980s, the passenger-centric platform façade has seen very little in the way of upkeep since then. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



Fig. 2.230: The outbound shelter is a simple metal structure today. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

DAYLESFORD STATION

Chronologically, Daylesford Station was the last stop to be created between Overbrook and Paoli, established ca. 1890. Somewhat of an afterthought, it is the only stop on the line to not have its own enclosed station structure. It appears that Daylesford was built simply as an in-between stop in the stretch from Berwyn and Paoli; its inclusion on the line roughly preserves the idea of operating one station per linear mile.

The community of Daylesford was almost non-existent in 1890, its only real landmark being the Blue Ball Inn. Situated north of the railroad on the old route of the Lancaster Turnpike (today's Old Lancaster Road), the inn was a well-established post before the railroad was constructed.¹ As soon as 1887, the land surrounding Daylesford was still quite rural even in comparison to the sparsely developed Main Line. The property on which Daylesford Station would be built was owned by Robert Glenn in 1887. The Lancaster Turnpike crossed the railroad on the property, and wound north past a public school building. By 1900, the area around the station had been subdivided and many streets had been added.

It is sometimes stated that A.J. Cassatt demanded the establishment of Daylesford Station, as his Chesterbrook Farm was located just to the north, presumably closer to Daylesford than Berwyn. However, there is no evidence to suggest that he ever used a station other than Berwyn while residing at Chesterbrook (he even personally had the road between Chesterbrook

¹ There are a number of stories about the Blue Ball Inn's proprietress, Prissy Robinson, as told in the *Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society History Quarterly* of June 1972 in the article "The Upper Main Line" by Robert M. Goshorn. According to legend, Ms. Robinson put log barriers across the railroad tracks, so that the railroad operators tasked with their removal would have to go to the Inn for refreshment. In another legend, one of Ms. Robinson's cows was killed by a passing train, and as she was not satisfied with her damage payment, greased the tracks with the cow's remains to stall rail traffic. These stories are apocryphal, as are the claims that Robinson was a murderer whose victims still haunt the old inn, now a residence.

Farm and Berwyn Station macadamized). Berwyn was much more of a “full service” depot, complete with indoor waiting room and staff. Daylesford was likely just a station to bridge the gap to Paoli, and was possibly built as an impetus to promote development in the area.

The origin of the name “Daylesford” comes from the 18th century Governor General of British India, Warren Hastings. Despite his severe rule and resulting impeachment, Hastings was able to take his earnings from the East India Company to buy and remodel the Daylesford House in the English village of the same name in Gloucestershire.² Daylesford remains one of the least recognized names in the list of Main Line towns, known best for its nearest landmark, Daylesford Abbey, a Norbertine Catholic community south of the station. The Norbertines first settled in the Cassatt estate in Berwyn (which belonged to the family of PRR president A.J. Cassatt) in 1954, then migrated to their current 130 acre site in the 1960s, building structures there of notable modern architecture.

The only Pennsylvania Railroad structure ever built at Daylesford was a shelter typical of those found at nearly every other Main Line station, but significantly shorter at two bays in length. It was situated on the south side of the tracks for inbound commuters; the north side is the only Main Line platform to lack any type of structure. To provide some shelter, the shed at Daylesford was partially enclosed, with windows facing the tracks.

Daylesford’s largest and best known large estate was Oak Knoll, built in 1896 and adjoining the railroad’s south border (Lancaster Pike would later be re-aligned to cut between the property and the railroad). Owned by Alfred Edward Newman, who was best known as one of

² Patterson, Emma C. “Your Town and My Town.” *Suburban and Wayne Times*, June 16, 1950. The column continues to state that an American friend of Hastings, Richard Graham, was a landholder near the site of Daylesford Station and suggested the name. Graham did own land near the station, according to the 1887 railroad atlas, though it seems unlikely that the two were friends, as Hastings bought Daylesford House in 1788 and the station on the Main Line was built 102 years later.

the most prolific book collectors of his time. He was often visited by literary figures, who undoubtedly arrived via the train to Daylesford Station³ (see fig. 2.231).

The original shelter at Daylesford Station was never upgraded by the Pennsylvania Railroad or subsequent agencies. At some point in the mid-20th century, its windows were removed and bare walls put in their place. In 1995, SEPTA became concerned with the shelter's condition, especially in its ability to withstand snowstorms. In the early morning of February 18, 1995, the building was pulled down towards Lancaster Avenue and hauled off as scrap, leaving an empty platform.⁴ SEPTA soon built a new structure, still not a fully enclosed building but a SEPTA-standard metal frame and glass shelter, on the site of the old building. To this day, there is no shelter on the north side of the tracks.

³ Post, J.B. "A. Edward Newton and Oak Knoll." *Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society History Quarterly*, Winter, 2005, 27-28.

⁴ "Notes and Comments." *Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society History Quarterly*, April, 1995, 85.

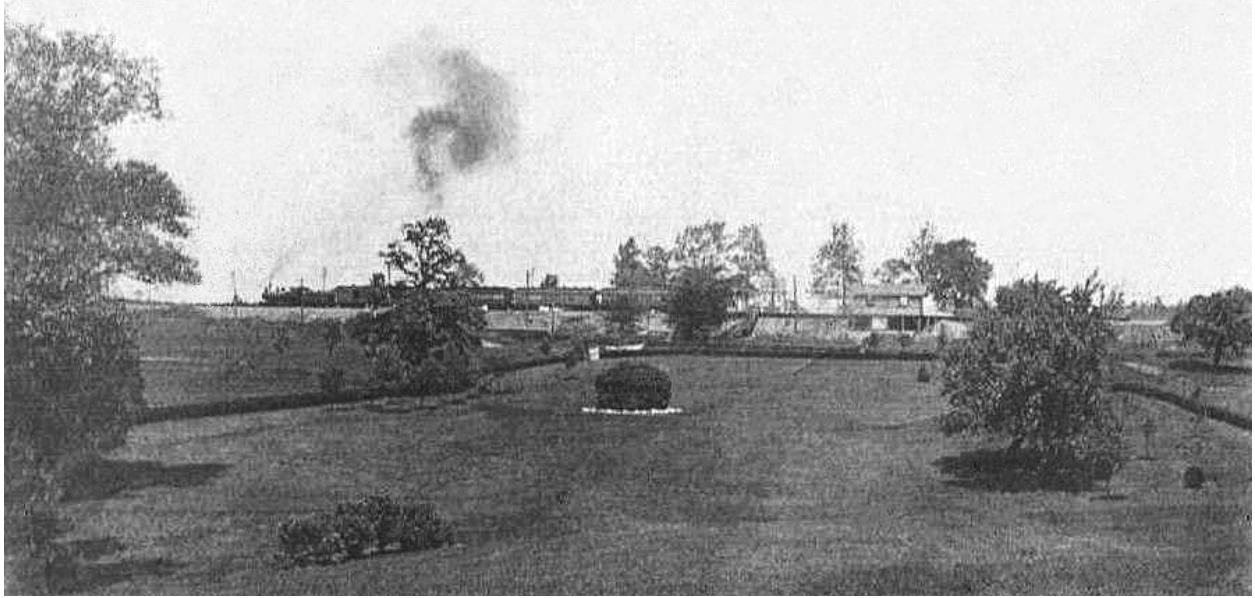


Fig. 2.231: The earliest known photograph of Daylesford Station is this view, looking north from the lawn of Oak Knoll. A train heading west towards Paoli leaves a giant cloud of smoke. (Tredyffrin-Easttown Historical Society/Free Library of Philadelphia)

Fig. 2.232: This snapshot of two women pulling the semaphore signal at Daylesford Station in 1914 is the best detailed view of the original structure. It also shows that trains did not always stop at Daylesford; they had to be signaled via the semaphore. (Library Company of Philadelphia)





Fig. 2.233: A GG1 is about to pass Daylesford from the west, in this mid-20th century view. (ebay.com)

Fig. 2.234: SEPTA's current Daylesford Station is a modern shelter that may be longer than its predecessor, but lacks its character. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



MERION STATION

Merion is a unique station, and has one of the most remarkable histories on the Main Line. It is the last intact “complex” of station buildings, including a freight building, waiting room and even a functioning post office. It was the last station the Pennsylvania Railroad would build on the Main Line until reconstructing Paoli in 1953, and it has been the most consistently well-maintained depot on the entire line. The motivations behind its upkeep can be used as a model for all Main Line stations.

The first station west of Overbrook (and therefore the first in Lower Merion Township), Merion first became a stop in 1864. The original Merion Station was a simple board and batten building with limited decoration, but its surroundings were beautiful. Its architecture was based on a rectangular plan, but it was similar in ornamentation and simplicity to the architecture of Overbrook and White Hall stations. The only other structure nearby was an early Pennsylvania Railroad switch tower. The 1864 station was kept in use for decades, but it did not serve without modifications. In 1884, contractor Jacob R. Garber was hired to add platform roofs to both sides of the tracks and remove what little ornamentation there was, which altered the appearance of the station greatly.¹

In the middle of the 1910s, there had not been construction of new stations along the Main Line for nearly 25 years. The railroad seemed to be pleased with their present station lineup, and with expanding these structures with additions as needed. Before World War I, the Merion Civic Association let the PRR know that the community deserved a new station.

¹ Construction contract from the PRR archive of the Hagley Museum and Library.

The Merion Civic Association (MCA) was founded in 1913. Within its first five years of existence, the MCA was responsible for an impressive list of neighborhood improvements, including the installation of cast iron street signs (still in use), many public works improvements, and convincing the railroad to build a new Merion train station. In a 1917 magazine article, former U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt upheld Merion as a model community, and the MCA as an ideal civic organization.

I have in mind a community, Merion, Pennsylvania, that can stand as a model in civic matters. This is due to the public-spirited, disinterested leadership of several men and women working through a local civic association. The association has adopted the eminently sound, common-sense motto: 'To be nation right, and state right, we must first be community right.' ²

Around 1914, the Pennsylvania Railroad began planning a new Merion Station to appease the neighbors. Their work included the creation of a new post office structure on the station grounds, designed in the same architectural style as the passenger station. The MCA helped by creating new garden designs on the station grounds, and called it the “most artistically planted station on the Main Line.” ³ As construction dragged on during a time of war, the MCA installed an honor roll inside the station “as a silent but eloquent tribute to the patriotism of this community.” The small town had 58 names on the roll in 1918.⁴ The MCA also collected periodicals at the depot to be given to men in the service.⁵

² Roosevelt, Theodore. “Model Merion.” Reproduced on the MCA website. <http://www.merioncivic.org/about/ModelMerion.pdf>

³ *The Fifth Year Book of The Merion Civic Association*, 17.

⁴ *The Fifth Year Book of The Merion Civic Association*, 21.

⁵ *The Fifth Year Book of The Merion Civic Association*, 22.

Following World War I, the railroad completed their work with the construction of a freight house on the north side of the tracks, consistent in design with the existing station and post office. It is likely that the outbound ticket office (now unused) was built at the same time, and was joined to the post office by a new roof canopy. By 1923, the MCA had placed window boxes for flowers on the station, and has consistently maintained them ever since.⁶ Before the station was even ten years old, the MCA had convinced the PRR to repaint the station and post office buildings, and to hire a “scrub woman” to clean the waiting room weekly.⁷

The architecture of Merion Station is strikingly different from any other on the Main Line. A brick façade extends halfway up the elevations, with lightly painted stucco above. Multicolored slate roofs adorned the widely overhanging eaves. All woodwork was in a more modern Arts and Crafts style than what was common on the Main Line. Supports and brackets for roof canopies were extremely massive in comparison to the standard platform roofs of the 1880s and ‘90s, pointing to a marked design shift in the Pennsylvania Railroad.⁸

Today, Merion Station remains as the official post office name of the town. There are two reasons for this: the United States Postal Service recommends the use of the name “Merion Station” in order to differentiate it from another Pennsylvania township called “Marion,” and also because the Merion Station Post Office still operates on the site of the station. For decades, most Main Line stations had their own post offices separate from those in the centers of towns, thus postmarks of “Wayne Station,” “Devon Station” and others are sometimes found. The fact

⁶ *The Tenth Year Book of The Merion Civic Association*, 16.

⁷ *The Tenth Year Book of The Merion Civic Association*, 20.

⁸ A freight building and platform canopy at St. Davids were built around the same time as Merion, and are the only other examples of this type of architecture on the Main Line.

that the town of “Merion Station” is still officially referred to by that name is a relic of a past convention nearly totally abandoned a century ago.

The MCA has continued its work at Merion Station on a weekly basis ever since the station was built. The Association’s present efforts include maintaining grounds, making sure flower boxes are planted (a 90 year tradition), and painting over graffiti. The Chair and Directors of the MCA’s Station & Grounds & Postal Affairs Committee are tasked with keeping friendly relationships with SEPTA, Amtrak, PennDOT, the Merion Botanical Society (which maintains the grounds adjoining the station), and U.S. Postal Service authorities. To this day, MCA volunteers tend to the grounds of the station on a weekly basis, even in winter months.

In 2007, Merion Station lost a bit of its exceptional integrity with well-intentioned refurbishments. The multicolored slate roofs found on the station, post office and freight house were replaced with asphalt shingles, which the MCA described in their newsletter as “longer-lasting.”⁹ Around the same time, SEPTA paved over the platforms’ original herringbone-patterned brick platforms with black asphalt. These changes came at the insistence of a community group that was only concerned with the condition and continued upkeep of their beloved station. The community of Merion’s involvement and insistence that the building be kept well by its owners is an inspiring legacy that every Main Line community should emulate.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has deemed Merion Station eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The Historic American Buildings Survey has photographed the station, freight building and post office.¹⁰

⁹ Merion Civic Association newsletter, Fall 2007, 6. <http://www.merioncivic.org/newsletters/fall07.pdf>

¹⁰ Station: HABS PA-6145-A. Post office: HABS PA-6145-B. Freight House: HABS PA-6145-C.



Fig. 2.235: Looking south at the 1864 Merion Station, when it was nearly new. (Radnor Historical Society)

Fig. 2.236: In the 1890s this photograph was taken of the old Merion Station, which can still be visible through its maze of canopies. (From *On the Main Line*, 18.)





Fig. 2.237: Another 1890s view, taken from the inbound platform, looking northwest. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

Fig. 2.238: This is how the neighborhood surrounding Merion Station appeared in the 1890s. The station is hidden behind what little plantings are seen in this view, in the center of the photograph. (Lower Merion Historical Society)

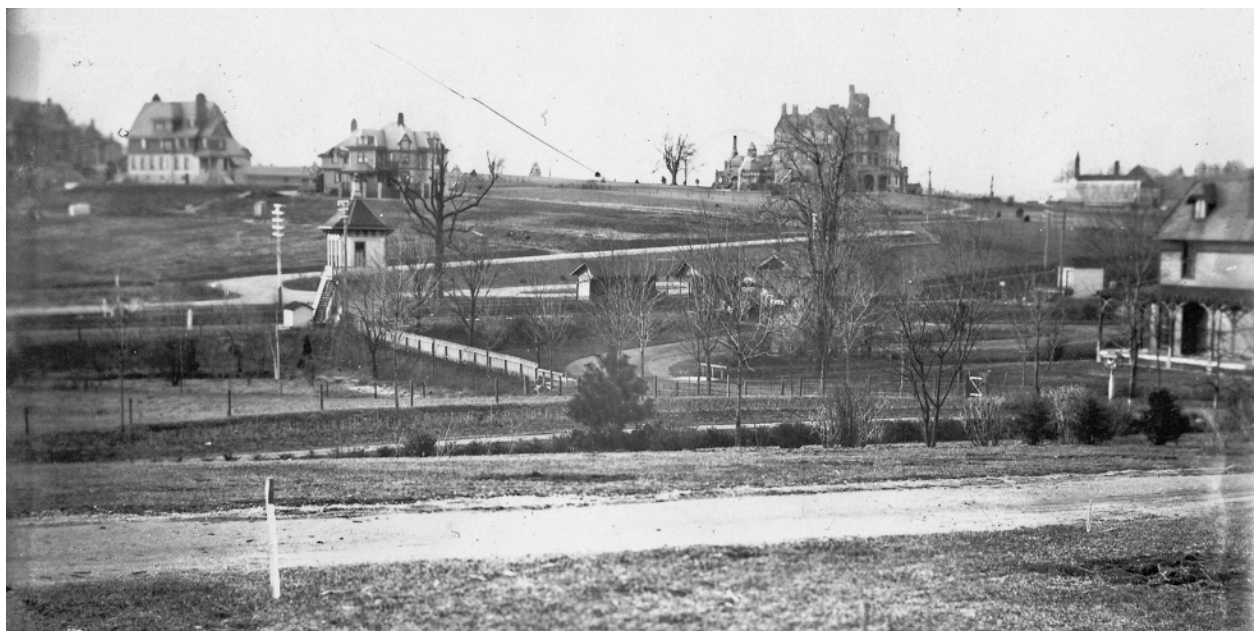




Fig. 2.239: Merion Station when new, ca. 1917. Compare with the same view in fig. 2.236. (Courtesy of Ted Xaras)

Fig. 2.240: A look northeast at the station (near side of tracks) and post office (far side of tracks) in this view from when the buildings were new. (Lower Merion Historical Society)





Fig. 2.241: This photo of the freight shed, taken from a passing train in 2004, shows the building's original roof and brick platform before both were replaced or covered. (Photo by the author, March 16, 2004)

Fig. 2.242: The roof of the station being replaced, Summer/Fall 2007. (MCA Newsletter, Fall 2007)





Fig. 2.243: A look at the façade details and window boxes of the station, summer 2010. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.244: The now unused outbound ticket office (left), post office (right), and the canopy roof that connects them. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)





Fig. 2.245: A peek under the canopy roof connecting the outbound ticket office and post office. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)

Fig. 2.246: The south entrance to the Merion Station post office. (Photo by the author, August 19, 2010)



The 17 Main Line stations currently in use have operated concurrently for decades, yet each has its own history of structures, renovations, and community support efforts. Each was formed at a different time, and all renovations have occurred piecemeal. The individual depots have depended on the success and determination of their surrounding communities to ensure their wellbeing.

The first few decades of the 21st century will be a turning point for a great many Main Line stations. The century opened with the completion of three major renovations – Overbrook, Strafford and Radnor – and the century’s first decade concluded with SEPTA’s most expensive and comprehensive effort to date, Wayne. Up next is the project at Villanova, the implications of which will have far-reaching effects upon that station and others scheduled for renovations. The two stations used by both SEPTA and Amtrak, Paoli and Ardmore, will soon undergo long-awaited and long-term construction projects (if all goes according to plan).

Perhaps most importantly, there are station structures that will be lucky to survive into the 2020s. Devon Station has languished without the major help it has needed for over 30 years. With the current economic situation, it seems that there is little hope that Amtrak will find its angelic developer for the property, yet neither that agency nor SEPTA seem willing to expend resources on it. Besides the major preservation concern at Devon, historic outbuildings at other stations are at risk. Switch towers found at Overbrook, Bryn Mawr and Paoli appear to be low priorities, especially at the latter two where they seem to be used for storage and not their original functions. In an era when track switching is computerized and done off-site, these historic towers (which are now about 110 years old) are no longer essential to rail operations. They are often overlooked by residents and passengers alike, and they are an extremely low

priority in the eyes of their owners. These structures are important to the understanding of how the mighty PRR worked.

The histories of the stations as described in this chapter capture the moment in time in which they were written, and as a result the words here will be outdated almost as soon as this document is printed. As of this writing, the proposed plan for Villanova Station is set to be evaluated by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The first batch of “Silverliner V” trains are rolling off the assembly line, and are the first new commuter equipment to travel the Main Line in nearly 30 years. As a result, the almost 50 year old Silverliner II cars will be retired, a major change in passenger interaction and operational aesthetics that will define the next few decades of SEPTA operation on the line.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHITECTS

Though sometimes obscured, sometimes overlooked because of poor condition, and always under-appreciated for a variety of reasons, the architecture of the Main Line's train stations is significant. The design of each station speaks to the railroad's power, its plan for a surrounding community, or the influence of prominent neighbors. The PRR intended to make the Main Line their showcase for tourism, power, and suburban living, and the unique architecture and well-kept appearance of each station along the line helped reinforce that vision. While many stations were adapted from standard designs found elsewhere in the PRR's quickly growing system, starting in the 1870s the PRR had their architects design unique stations that would stand out from the rest, and they publicized them in railroad journals of the day. These designs, and the architects who created them, put the Main Line on the map at a time when it was sparsely populated. Later, the railroad resorted to more standard designs for stations that could be erected more easily from existing plans. The goals and intentions of the railroad on the Main Line are reflected in the development pattern of the distinct design types of the stations.

Design: The Grand Statement (early 1870s)

Ardmore, Bryn Mawr

The Pennsylvania Railroad needed a grandiose structure to welcome patrons to their resort development of Bryn Mawr. PRR employees Joseph M. Wilson and Frederick G. Thorn designed a massive stone structure for the town, a design capable of making a statement as powerful as that of the Keystone Hotel, Bryn Mawr's major attraction. The resulting station was

a building with two front-gabled wings (each could have acted as a depot by itself), connected by an inset section with a perpendicular roof ridge. This center section had three gabled dormers facing the tracks. This station contained living spaces for the station agent, as well as waiting rooms. About two years later, Bryn Mawr Station was replicated two stops to the east at Ardmore, its H-shaped plan copied with the addition of a Stick style switch tower added to the east wing. Ardmore's two side wings are reversed from Bryn Mawr's; the smaller wing on the opposite side, their plans presumably being mirror images of each other.

Plans for Ardmore Station (fig. 3.3) show that inside, the station was as impressive as it was on the outside. There was a large passenger waiting room at the center of the building, with separate ladies' and gentlemen's waiting rooms to the rear of the main waiting room. The ladies' waiting room connected with a water closet; the gentlemen's room adjoined their assigned water closet, but it was only accessible from outdoors. The rest of the building (amounting to a very large amount of space) was used as quarters for railroad employees. More on this space is described on p. 244.

Design: The Basic Station, One and Two Story (early 1870s)

Wynnewood, Strafford (one story); Narberth, Haverford (two story)

Wynnewood Station was perhaps the simplest station of the early 1870s Wilson/Thorn designs for the Main Line. The main rectangular section of the depot had just three rooms (general waiting room, ladies' waiting room, and ticket office), with an east extension for two water closets. It is unclear if the diamond-shaped north and south gable windows ever served any useful function. Wynnewood's design was replicated perfectly in Wayne Station (later to

become Strafford Station), with the exception that the stone façades were instead built of wood ornamented with complex details. An obvious stylistic reinterpretation of Wynnewood with additional living spaces, the stations at Narberth and Haverford (originally named “Elm” and “Haverford College”) were designed to be more than simple waiting rooms. Each had an additional ground floor, allowing even more space for agents’ living quarters, and each had a second floor to make use of the front and rear dormers. The design of these four stations, all thought to have been built within about four years of each other, was intentionally designed to match. Additionally, most were built of stone that likely copied that of the “Grand Statement” stations of Bryn Mawr and Ardmore. Each station had its own personality, yet they were designed concurrently to work together visually as a cohesive group.

Design: Waiting Room and Attached Cottage (early 1870s-1890s)

Overbrook, Rosemont, Villanova, Radnor, St. Davids, Wayne, Devon

The prototype of this design is Overbrook, the earliest station on the Main Line (though it is possible that either the cottage or waiting room section predates the other). Here, a side-gabled waiting room is joined with a perpendicular two story cottage of an identical style. In the 1870s, two stations were built to this design, each taking cues from the previously built stations at the east end of the line. The first, Villanova, was built of the same type of stone as the others, giving the sense of a materialistic unity. The second, Radnor, was a derivation of Wynnewood (down to the diamond-shaped dormer windows), instead made of brick and with attached cottage of complementary style. These stations made a perceptible split between waiting room and residence, while they functioned in a single form at Narberth and Haverford stations. The new

stations began a change in massing that would influence Main Line depot architecture through the next two decades. Wayne and Devon, both designed a decade after Radnor, adopted this kind of massing, with a drastically different stylistic direction. Architect W.B. Powell took a much more Stick- and Shingle-inspired approach with much less symmetry. These stations made bold architectural statements with their materials: decorative terra cotta roof cresting, shaped shingles, and windows with many small panes. The results were distinctive buildings that matched the communities that were sprouting around them. The design of Devon Station was adapted for Homewood Station (east of Pittsburgh) in 1883, a variant in brick, which was later turned into a popular PRR standard design, found in St. Davids and Rosemont on the Main Line and in Downingtown farther west.

Design: Outliers

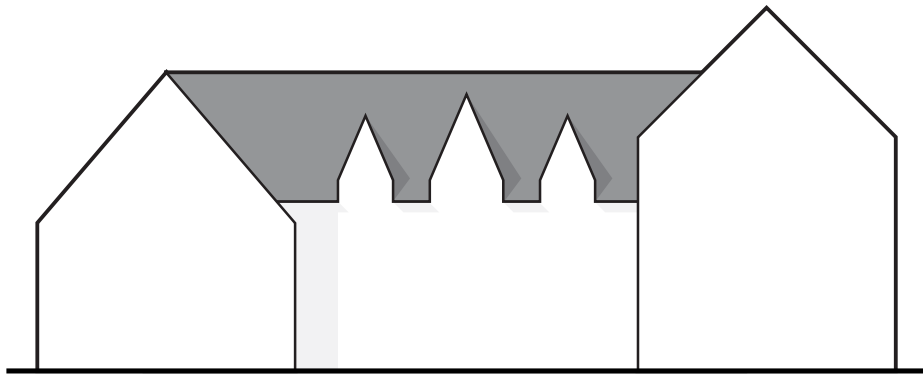
White Hall, Merion, Berwyn, Daylesford, Paoli

There are stations that do not fit into any of the three previous categories. White Hall, one of the oldest, is thought to be a unique design found nowhere else on the PRR. Berwyn was designed during a time of transition; its elevations are symmetrical, but its ornamentation points to a new style of PRR architecture. Paoli, with its side-gabled plan and track-facing shed dormer, was a PRR standard design, probably the first standard station on the Main Line not to be specific to the line. Daylesford was a standard design shed matching shelters throughout the entire PRR system. And Merion, the newest of the Main Line's historic stations, was a simple waiting room (the first very simple one story plan since Wynnewood nearly 45 years earlier). These outliers remain some of the most interesting stations on the line, perhaps because of their

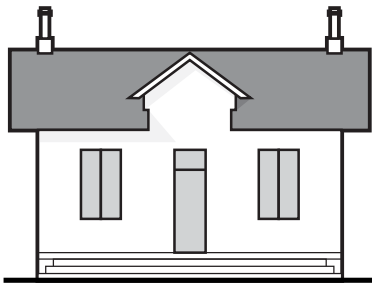
unique qualities. As for the architects of these stations, they are not well documented (except for Berwyn, which was designed by Wilson Bros. & Co.). Those with standard designs, Daylesford and Paoli, evidently came from the office of the PRR engineer. They were largely stations built to “fill in the gaps” or to appease townspeople who wanted improved accommodations, and therefore were built according to goals separate from a larger PRR plan, such as that which created the uniformly designed stations of the 1870s by architects Wilson and Thorn.



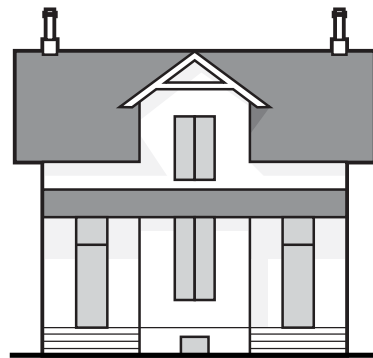
Fig. 3.1: The design for Devon Station was adapted for Homewood, a station near Pittsburgh, built in 1883. The design was then adopted by the PRR as a standard design, used on the Main Line in St. Davids and Rosemont. (Photograph by William Nicholson Jennings, Library Company of Philadelphia)



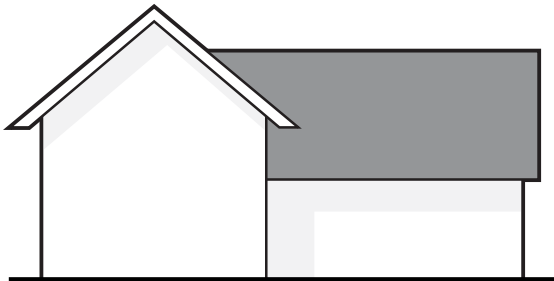
The Grand Statement
Ardmore, Bryn Mawr



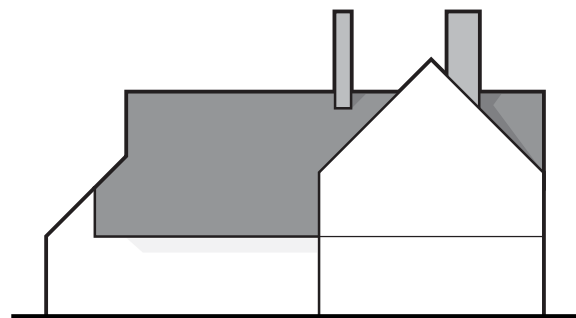
The Basic Station (One Story)
Wynnewood, Strafford



The Basic Station (Two Story)
Narberth, Haverford



Waiting Room & Cottage (Simple)
Overbrook, Villanova, Radnor



Waiting Room & Cottage (Decorative)
Rosemont, St. Davids, Wayne, Devon

Fig. 3.2: These basic outlines depict the majority of stations on the Main Line. Shown are simplified representations of the five major design schemes. (Illustration by the author)

Station Agent Living Quarters

While some so-called “flag stops” were meant simply as waiting rooms with very modest accommodations, the great majority of Main Line stations were built with combined residences for station agents. The size of the living quarters was determined by the station’s importance to the railroad; the quarters at Ardmore Station, for example, were vast in comparison to Paoli’s, due to the fact that the station itself was monumental.¹

The agents’ living accommodations were likely more expansive at Ardmore (see fig. 3.3) than any other station, even Bryn Mawr, as the track elevation at Ardmore gave that station an extra ground-level floor. The agent, who lived primarily on the second floor and basement and worked in the first floor ticket office, was afforded four bedrooms, a large dining room and even larger kitchen. Undoubtedly, being able to work at Ardmore Station would have been a coveted position among PRR employees in the 1870s.

Like Ardmore, the smaller stations at Narberth and Haverford were built with a ground floor. Presumably this level and the second floor above the waiting room were used for residential functions, though no plans are known to exist as proof. These simple rectangular-plan stations with residential quarters were replaced in the following decade with the “Waiting Room & Cottage” plan described previously. These buildings had a strong visual distinction between what was the cottage and what was the “business end,” which likely added some privacy for those who lived there. The plans of Wayne Station (fig. 3.4, 3.5) show that a station agent would have enjoyed rather comfortable living conditions. The first floor consisted of a living room, kitchen and water closet. The agent did not even have to leave the cottage half of the building to

¹ It is possible that, since Ardmore Station was also home to a telegraph office and switch tower within the single station structure, several employees could have lived in the building, sharing a kitchen and dining room in the basement.

sell tickets to patrons in the waiting room. The second floor housed three bedrooms of roughly equal size, each with a closet of its own. One of the bedrooms was within the track-facing tower, and must have given its occupant an exciting view. Photographs of the station show striped canvas awnings over the second story windows. The agent also enjoyed a fenced-in yard to the east of the station, so that gardening or other outdoor activities could be enjoyed by him and his family without the distractions of the railroad or the great deal of activity that occurred around the station. Devon Station had a nearly identical floor plan (which, unlike Wayne, is still intact), including the fenced-in yard.

Within about ten years, Wayne Station was expanded and the residence was converted for an enlarged waiting room. It is unknown whether or not the railroad continued to provide housing for station agents; while when first built most stations made a point to provide living quarters for the employees, those spaces were consequently abandoned or converted for other uses. The idyllic era when a railroad employee could live comfortably with his family (and even keep a private garden) at his well-designed and maintained workplace was a fleeting one.



Fig. 3.6: Plans of Ardmore Station's four levels. The first floor (top) contains a main waiting room, separate ladies' and gentlemen's rooms, baggage room, ticket office, bedroom and water closets. The basement (center) contains parlor, bedroom, dining room, kitchen, and cellar with furnace. A cellar below (lower left) contains another furnace. The second story (lower right) adds three bedrooms. Not shown is the second floor of the tower, which presumably contained various apparatus for operating block signals. (*Railroad Gazette*, March 30, 1877)

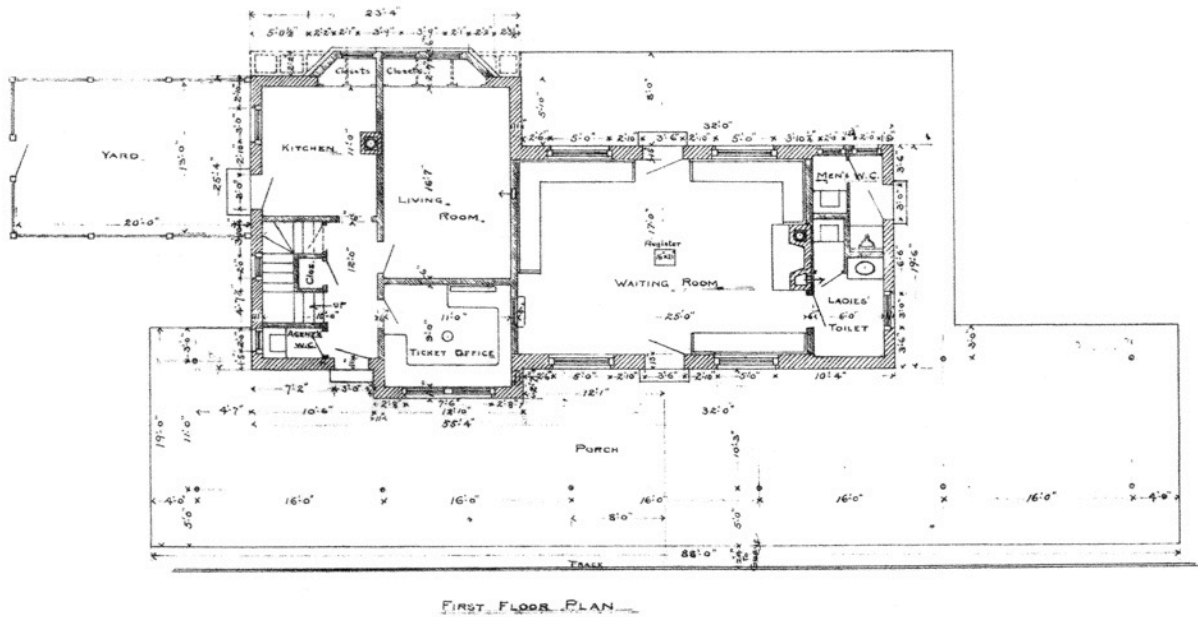
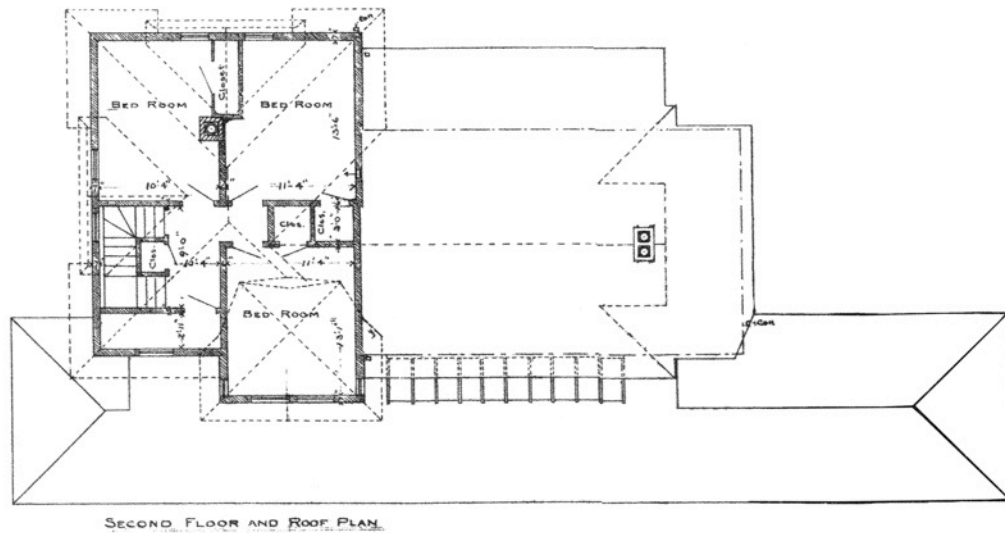


Fig. 3.4: The first floor plan of Wayne Station features (from left) fenced yard, cottage (including kitchen, living room, ticket office, stairs and water closet), waiting room, and patron toilets. Train platform is below. The south bay window (at top of drawing) is a prominent feature, though it contained just two closets. (Amtrak archives, Radnor Historical Society copy)

Fig. 3.5: Wayne Station's second floor plan, featuring three bedrooms, each with a closet. The space representing the high waiting room ceiling is shown at right. Dotted lines represent roof lines. (Amtrak archives, Radnor Historical Society copy)



Architects: J.M. Wilson & F.G. Thorn

Employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad's Office of Bridges & Buildings, Joseph M. Wilson and Frederick G. Thorn collaborated to design many of the PRR's Main Line stations starting in the 1870s. The result was a group of consistent, compatible stations that represented the PRR's sophistication and uniformity.

An 1858 graduate of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Joseph Miller Wilson (1838-1902) was somewhat of a Renaissance man. Following in his father's footsteps by studying civil engineering at RPI, Wilson took a two year course in analytical chemistry immediately following his time at the Institute. Perhaps thanks to his father, Wilson began working for the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1860 as an assistant engineer. He became resident engineer of the PRR's middle division from 1863-65, then principal assistant engineer from 1865-86.² This title was later known as Engineer of Bridges and Buildings.

Wilson became involved with architect Henry Pettit in the early 1870s while still employed by the PRR, and the pair designed competition entries for the 1876 Centennial Exposition. Wilson and Pettit eventually became involved with designing many buildings at the Exposition.³ This work led to an increased prominence in Wilson's portfolio, and may have been the impetus for breaking off from the Pennsylvania Railroad.

A native of Williamsport, Pa., Frederick G. Thorn was active in the architectural field from 1857 through 1911. From 1863-64, Thorn worked in the PRR offices at Altoona. He then

² St. Andrew's Society of Philadelphia, 367.

³ Tatman, Sandra L. *American Architects and Buildings* Database: Biography of Joseph M. Wilson. http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21565

moved to the Philadelphia & Erie Railroad, where he worked with John A. Wilson, future civil engineer for Wilson Brothers & Co. From 1868-76, Thorn worked on the PRR's Philadelphia to Pittsburgh main line, at which time he and Joseph M. Wilson designed many of the stations on the Overbrook-Paoli route.⁴ The Wilson/Thorn partnership was apparently close enough that Thorn was brought into Wilson Brothers & Company at its formation in 1876.

Architects: Wilson Brothers & Company

Perhaps in response to their work for the Centennial Exposition and the flood of publicity that came their way as a result, Joseph M. Wilson and John A. Wilson formed Wilson Brothers & Company, organized January 1, 1876. The Pennsylvania Railroad arranged with J.M. Wilson to continue to work for the railroad despite now being part of an independent firm. The railroad agreed to be billed \$300 per month plus expenses.⁵ The PRR's confidence in the architects and engineers is evident in their hiring the firm to design Broad Street Station, the PRR's grandest structure and also headquarters, located in downtown Philadelphia, and the Bryn Mawr Hotel.

While railroads gave the firm the bulk of their work, Wilson Bros. & Co. also designed private residences (many on the Main Line), churches, hotels, hospitals, and factories. In addition to designing buildings, Wilson Bros. & Co. designed a significant number of bridges: iron trusses, plate girders, wooden trusses, and even aqueducts. The firm also provided expertise in civil engineering, including consulting in the creation of railroads. Even PRR competitors liked the Wilsons' work, and the famous Reading Terminal in Philadelphia (the terminus of the PRR competition Philadelphia & Reading Railroad) was another Wilson Bros. creation.

⁴ *Catalogue of Work Executed*, 6.

⁵ Baer, Chris. "PRR Chronology, 1876."

JOHN A. WILSON,
CIVIL ENGINEER.
CHAS. G. DARRACH,
CIVIL AND HYDRAULIC ENGINEER.

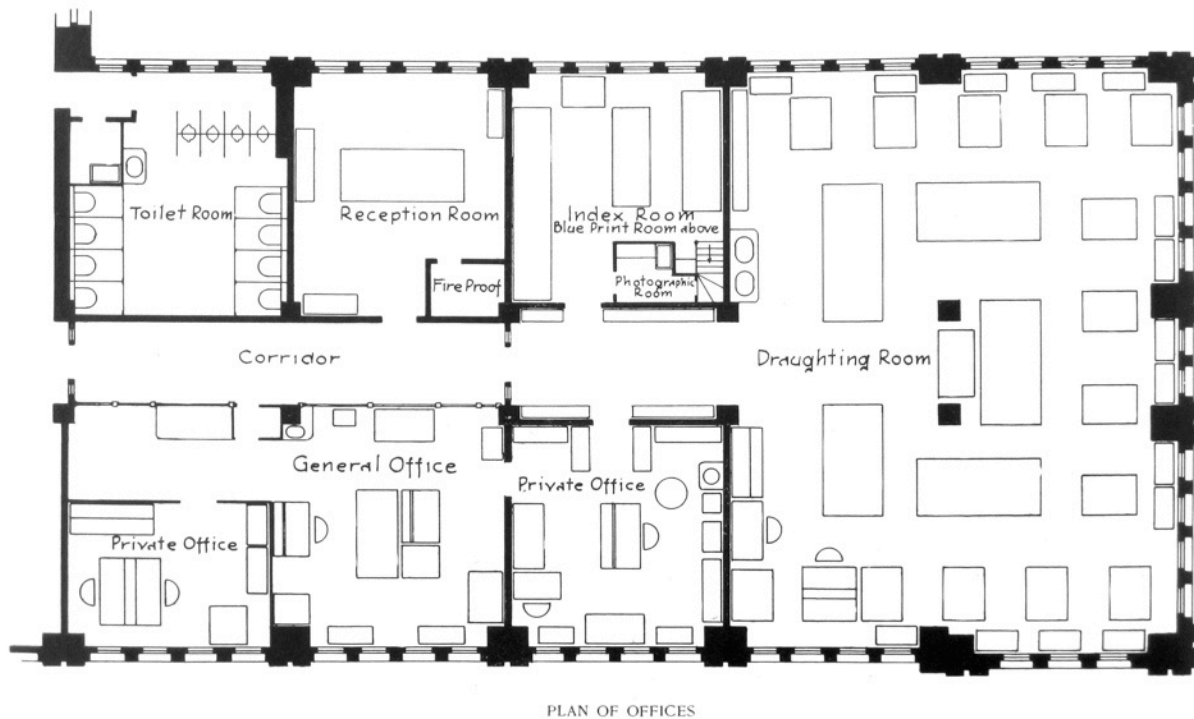
JOSEPH M. WILSON,
CIVIL ENGINEER AND ARCHITECT.

HENRY W. WILSON,
CIVIL ENGINEER.
HENRY A. MACOMB,
ARCHITECT.

WILSON BROTHERS & CO.,
Civil Engineers, Architects,
AND
CONSULTING ENGINEERS,
ROOM 1036,
DREXEL BUILDING. PHILADELPHIA, PENNA.

Fig. 3.6: Advertisement for Wilson Brothers & Co. (From Poor, 251.)

Fig. 3.7: Offices of Wilson Brothers & Co., Drexel Building, 1897. (From *Architectural Work of Wilson Brothers & Co. Vol. 1*, 1897.)



Architect: Washington Bleddyn Powell

An architect who gained prominence towards the end of his relatively short life, Washington Bleddyn Powell (1854-1910) was an employee of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the Office of Engineering and Buildings from 1881 through 1887. A year into his PRR employment, Powell likely designed both Devon and Wayne Stations for the Main Line. He also designed several stations on the Pennsylvania Railroad's Philadelphia, Germantown and Chestnut Hill (also known as Chestnut Hill West) line, including Tulpehocken, St. Martin's and Allen Lane.⁶ His work on these stations was well known, but his involvement on the Main Line was not until documents were discovered for this thesis.

Powell split with the railroad and formed a private firm with William Glyde Wilkins, former Assistant Engineer of Construction on the PRR.⁷ Wilkins & Powell was in business only a short time; in 1889, Powell was elected Architect for the Philadelphia Building Commission. This job involved the construction and design of various public buildings, and gave Powell the somewhat unenviable task of overseeing the completion of the massively behind schedule, over-budget Philadelphia City Hall. Started in 1870, it would not be until about 1901 that the building would be completed. Although the original designers of the enormous Second Empire style City Hall (who died before its completion) are largely recognized for the design, Powell is credited with getting the job done, including the design of interior spaces such as the City Council Chamber, which is still in use.⁸

⁶ Philadelphia Architects and Buildings. "Project list of Washington Bleddyn Powell." http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display_projects.cfm/26459

⁷ "Personals," *Railroad and Engineering Journal*, March, 1889, 145.

⁸ Doebley, Carl E. "Nomination of Public Interior Portion of Building or Structure, Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, Philadelphia Historical Commission." Significance Section.

When Wayne Station was submitted for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998-9, a great deal of its significance was attributed to its connection with the Wilson Brothers & Co. firm, and Joseph M. Wilson in particular. Although this was based on false information, Wayne Station's importance is not to be diminished because Powell was actually the designer. Wilson Bros. & Co. may have been the preeminent railroad station architects of their time, but W.B. Powell was important for his own accomplishments.

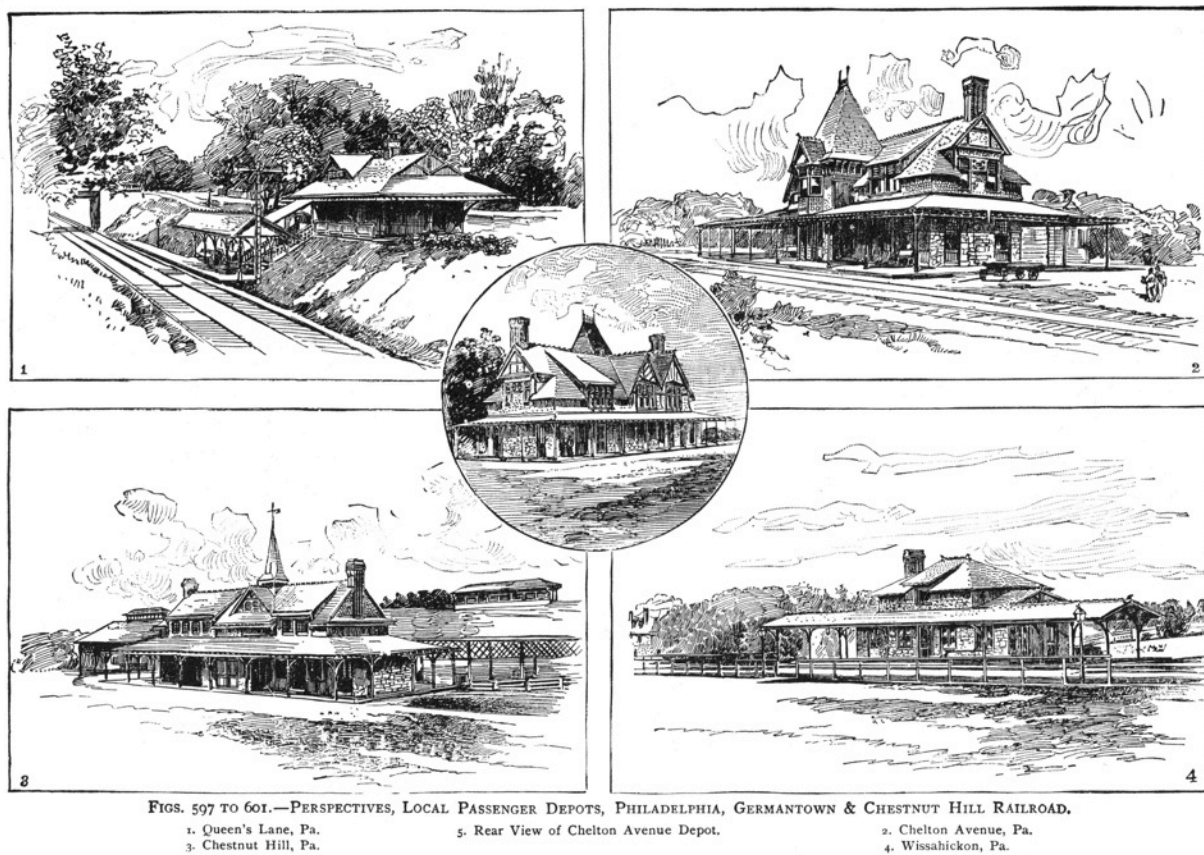


Fig. 3.8: W. Bleddyn Powell's designs for four stations on the Philadelphia, Germantown & Chestnut Hill Railroad, a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad. As there is no signature, it is unknown if these renderings were drawn by Powell, but the designs are attributed to him. (Berg, 326.)

CHAPTER 4

CASE STUDY: THE RENOVATION OF WAYNE STATION

Wayne Station is the most recently renovated stop on the Main Line. To say that the changes to Wayne were significant is a substantial understatement. Not only was the station building itself upgraded and restored, but the way that passengers use the railroad there was fundamentally changed. Work at Wayne started with a local community effort, the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association, which in 1996 began the process to get the station historic designation and lay the framework to a historically sensitive renovation. Following years of fundraising, publicity and minor construction work, the project was taken over by SEPTA and finished in the summer of 2010. Following the renovation's completion, it is now important to look back at the changes made to the station, to analyze the affects on its historic fabric, and to think about what could have been done better to more fully appreciate its historic integrity. In many ways, SEPTA's work at Wayne could be viewed as an indication of how the agency will update other Main Line stations in the future, and to inform preservationists on how to approach these upcoming projects.

The Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association

For the most part, the Wayne Station project was executed with sympathy for the station's history and historic integrity. Much of the credit for this can go to Wayne resident James C. (Jim) Higgins, and the organization that he founded, the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association (WSHPA). From 1984-1992, Higgins was Commissioner of Radnor Township's First Ward, where Wayne Station and the North Wayne Historic District are located. In 1986 he

was among the neighbors involved with efforts to repaint the station. For many years, the building had been painted maroon with white trim, a sort of “negative image” of how most think of the paint scheme today. The civic groups of North and South Wayne came together to persuade SEPTA to repaint the station, and pick up the bill. Roger Moss, of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, was consulted on what historically accurate paint colors to use.¹

A new coat of paint does a great deal towards improving a building’s appearance and public perception, but neither the station nor its outbound canopy received the kind of attention their structural fabric truly needed. Little by little, pieces of the station’s history were lost to time over the decades. Its slate roof was replaced with shingles in the 1940s, at which point its terra cotta roof cresting also disappeared. The tower’s decorative weather vane remained, though not for long. In the 1960s, the ca. 1884 freight building to the east of the station was demolished. Sometime mid-20th century, the outbound shelter was cut down in size, from twelve bays to nine. In the 1980s, most of the station’s windows were boarded up. In the 1990s, a vandal saw the station’s great sloping south roof as a giant canvas, and took liberties with spray paint. Though this “art” was painted over some time later, its faint shadow remained for more than a decade longer.

Bordering the station to the north is the neighborhood of North Wayne. Its history is intertwined with that of the depot, with its first homes being constructed a year after the station was complete. The North Wayne Protective Association (NWPA), founded in 1885, has taken a limited role over the years in station and grounds maintenance. The NWPA would occasionally perform general maintenance, including painting over graffiti in the undergrade tunnel and

¹ Cooper, Helen. “SEPTA Brushes Wayne Station.” *Suburban and Wayne Times*, July 10, 1986.

landscaping grounds on the north side of the tracks. In addition, the NWPA would notify SEPTA of necessary repairs, and worked with Amtrak to secure a tenant for the station in the early 1990s.

One of SEPTA's attempts to improve Wayne Station occurred in 1991, as part of its Station Revitalization Program. \$150,000 of the program's \$1.2 million was spent on Wayne, doing repairs, painting, installing new bathroom fixtures, heating and air conditioning. The NWPA was glad to see that work was being done on the station, but was dismayed that the neighbors were not told about the changes, and about some of the less attractive alterations. Four new metal doors were installed, replacing the original double doors that were character-defining features. The new doors were SEPTA-standard, and were installed to ensure the station's security.²

As the building's condition continued to deteriorate during the 1990s, the need for a new dedicated organization to advocate for the station became evident. Led by Higgins and a group of mostly North Wayne residents, the WSHPA was founded in 1996. The group was primarily concerned with the deteriorating canopy at the north parking lot, which sheltered passengers waiting for their ride after arriving from the city. In addition, the main station building's gutter and downspout system was inadequate, resulting in rotting woodwork and creating an unsafe situation in winter months. With these two preliminary goals in mind, the WSHPA gained 501(c)(3) status and began fund raising. The WSHPA appealed to the community on their website:

After 116 years as a symbol of Wayne's historic past, the Wayne train station has become a blemish on our community. What was once a treasured asset has fallen into a perilous state of disrepair and given further decline could be demolished

² Sama, Dominic. "On Track with Train Station Renovations." *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 4, 1991.

and replaced with something totally out of place for our community. Amtrak, the owner of the station, and SEPTA, the lessee, have exhausted all available resources for refurbishing in the foreseeable future, except for emergency repairs. For this reason, the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association has been formed by citizens residing near or using the Wayne Station and concerned about the preservation of the station, its history and the quality of life in Wayne and the surrounding community. We include members of neighborhood organizations, including the North Wayne Protective Association and the Wayne Public Safety Association: Local businesses and corporations: and private individuals. Unless a coalition of private interests mobilizes to restore the building, it will deteriorate further and could be lost.³

The WSHPA worked out an agreement with Amtrak to make physical improvements to the station, and had to coordinate activities with SEPTA on their work, as nothing they did could negatively impact railroad operations. From the very beginning, the WSHPA did not want to make any changes to the station to alter its historic fabric, unless there were safety or security requirements. A North Wayne resident and preservation planner for the Delaware County Planning Department, Beverlee Barnes, was brought on to advise on historic alterations.

The WSHPA began a fund-raising effort to save the north parking lot canopy, while simultaneously working to gain National Register status for the station. The nomination was seen as a good way to raise awareness, and convince potential donors that the WSHPA was a serious organization. Architectural historian George E. Thomas, who was then working on his monograph on architect William L. Price, was hired to write the nomination.

Sales of a ceramic model of Wayne Station was one fund-raising effort, which, although not a big moneymaker, raised awareness in the community about the WSHPA's efforts to save the building. According to Higgins, selling the miniatures was a good way to promote the concept of the station as an important Wayne building to potential donors. In addition, engraved bricks

³ <http://www.waynepa.com/wstation/waynestation.htm>

were sold at \$200 each to form a “patio” with benches on part of the inbound platform, east of the station. This was a very successful effort, bringing in a significant amount of money and interest. Other donors were recognized on two large bronze plaques installed on the north façade of the building. One particular donation from a North Wayne family went towards rebuilding the north canopy. A total of \$221,000 was raised of private funds, and an additional \$500,000 came from SEPTA, federal and state sources. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission awarded a Keystone Grant for the station, to be matched by SEPTA. However, because of conditions that came with the grant, SEPTA turned it down and funded the entire amount. This dispute resulted in a six month construction delay.⁴

Two contractors were hired, one to repair the north parking lot canopy, and another to repair the station’s dormers, woodwork on the east end, and new windows for the first floor restrooms. Contractors also repointed and cleaned the station’s brickwork. The unsightly metal doors installed by SEPTA in 1991 were replaced with wooden double doors similar to the originals. Windows were uncovered, and the sashes that remained were repaired and painted. In the south bay window (at the restrooms), new windows had to be created with frosted glass.

Integral to the restoration process was the interior work done by Colin Mattis, owner of the Station Café and Juice Bar. In 1999, Mattis received an “adaptive reuse” award for the conversion of the interior into a café from the Delaware County Planning Commission.⁵ Amtrak charged a high rent for the space, and eventually Mattis was forced to sell the business. He had put approximately \$50,000 into restoring the waiting room (used by both SEPTA and the café), including painting the ceiling, refinishing the floor, and adding furniture.

⁴ Richards, Ryan. “Keeping Wayne Station’s Preservation on Track.” *Suburban and Wayne Times*, March 18, 2004.

⁵ Barnard, Anne. “Local Historians Cited for Efforts.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, May 12, 1999.



Fig. 4.1: WSHPA members and the sign they erected on the station's west lawn to show fundraising progress. (*Suburban & Wayne Times*, March 9, 2000.)

Fig. 4.2: Donor recognition plaques installed by the WSHPA on the station's north wall. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



SEPTA Renovation, 2007-2010

On July 23, 2007, SEPTA and Systra Consulting held a community meeting at the Radnor Memorial Library to reveal their plans for Wayne Station. For the first time, the public was able to see their proposed changes, including drawings of new high-level platforms. Work began almost a year later, and would not be complete for another two. The supposed original investment for the project was \$14 million, though the end total was \$22.7 million.⁶ Systra Consulting and Klein & Hoffman were engineers, A&E Consulting was the general contractor, and many other other local firms were employed for the project.

A long list of alterations were made to the station, with varying degrees of impact of the historic fabric. Described below are several of the most noticeable changes.

New High-Level Platforms

By far the most substantial change to Wayne Station was the addition of new high-level concrete platforms on both sides of the tracks, to the east of the original platforms. Not only do these platforms and their metal shelters change the appearance of the station as a whole, but also the way that passengers interact with trains and the station. Although they were built away from the existing platforms in order to avoid interference with the historic integrity of the station and outbound shelter, each new canopy overlapped with the historic canopies on either side. They do not touch any historic fabric, but their visual interaction with the historic structures is impossible to ignore. Concrete ramps from the platforms lead to the parking lots below. On the north side, this system is considerable due to the high elevation of the right-of-way.

⁶ “SEPTA Unveils Revitalized Historic Wayne Train Station.” SEPTA Press Release, June 25, 2010. <http://www.septa.org/media/releases/2010/06-25.html>



Fig. 4.3: Looking west toward the station from the north high-level platform, shortly after completion. (Photo by the author, November 27, 2009)

Fig. 4.4: The new outbound high-level platform canopy overlapping with the re-constructed historic canopy. (Photo by the author, January 18, 2010)



Platforms Raised in Front of Station

In order to make the outdoor platforms even with the floor of the station waiting room/café, they were raised by about six inches. The old platforms, on both sides of the tracks, were laid in tan brick in a typical stretcher bond pattern. The bricks were distinctive, with curved edges, and were laid on their sides for a narrower appearance. These bricks were removed from each platform, and most were given to the Strasburg Railroad. The majority of surfacing of the new platforms were faced in concrete, with a strip of new brick pavers running lengthwise directly under each platform canopy. Yellow tiles with tactile bumps were installed along the trackside edge.



Fig. 4.5: Looking east from the new inbound platform at station-level. Brick pavers are visible underneath the roof canopy. Elsewhere, concrete pavement and tactile panels were installed. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Outbound Canopy Rebuilt

With the inception of the new high-level platforms, the old platforms and their canopies were relegated to “emergency use” functions only, and in truth just remained as remnants of the station’s historic character. Still, each historic canopy was taken down and re-built, using as much of the historic fabric as possible. On the outbound side, this meant that most of the original structure had to be scrapped and re-built from scratch. The walls, made of thin wood strips, were for the most part unsalvageable. Two of the shelter’s bays (out of nine) ended up using the original fabric, while the rest was reproduced exactly from new material. Most columns, rafters and brackets fared better, and were put back in place (some of them receiving new metal-reinforced framework inside the members). The PRR-standard shelter originally had a row of windows, one to each bay, that were lost decades before. Similar windows were created for the shelter’s restoration. Originally, not every bay of the shelter had a window opening, for reasons that had not been evident by the time it was re-built. While the arrangement of window openings had been seemingly random, when re-built, the SEPTA construction manager instructed the builders to cluster all of the bays without openings at the west end. Despite all of SEPTA’s efforts to accurately re-construct the shelter, this decision to re-order the arrangement of windows was made at the last minute. The rebuilt canopy was given a new asphalt shingle “slate lookalike” roof, whereas the original likely always had a standing seam metal roof.



Fig. 4.6: Just before deconstruction, the level of the shelter's deterioration was easily visible from the north parking lot. (Photo by the author, January 6, 2007)

Fig. 4.7: The dilapidated shelter as seen from the opposite platform in 2003. (Photo by the author, December 29, 2003)





Fig. 4.8: The shelter was re-constructed starting from the east. (Photo by the author, August 17, 2009)

Fig. 4.9: Walls were added to the reconstructed shelter. Before painting, it was clear which sections were composed of original fabric and which were new material. (Photo by the author, November 27, 2009)



Interior Modified for ADA

As the high-level platforms and other changes were made for Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, so were changes to the interior of the station. The most drastic was the alteration of restroom fixtures, and the widening of restroom doorway openings from the waiting room. The contractors painstakingly re-created the paneled doors and door frames to match the historic counterparts in order to comply with ADA measurements.



Fig. 4.10, 4.11: 1890s-era restroom doorways (left) were re-created in wider, ADA-compliant forms (right). The doors, door frames and crown molding were reproduced with new dimensions. (Photos by the author, April 8, 2009)

Columns Replaced

Perhaps the most controversial change to the station's historic fabric was the replacement of metal columns, specified in the original drawings for the station and in place since about 1883, with thicker, "beefier" columns of a similar look. The original columns were distinctive, and used elsewhere on the PRR such as at Rosemont and Devon stations (where they are still in place). The capitals are cast iron pieces with decorative bevelled bands. The bases slope down gently to form a thicker support. They are joined by a simple metal tube, about three inches in diameter. SEPTA's replacement columns are about twice that diameter, with capitals and bases custom designed to match the originals in appearance. The reasons for replacing the original columns is puzzling; they seemed to be in good condition after 125 years of use, especially since the new platforms negated the old ones where the columns acted as supports. After installation, it was clear that the columns' drastic change in scale significantly altered the visual appearance of the historic inbound platform.



Fig. 4.12: One of the original metal columns lays on the ground awaiting its fate. (Photo by the author, April 2, 2009)



Fig. 4.13, 4.14: In a photo from 2004 (above), the delicate metal columns are seen supporting the inbound canopy. The new columns (below) were considerably thicker, and replaced the original, character-defining columns from the 1880s. (Photos by the author, August 11, 2004; March 24, 2010)



Mortar Repaired and Stone Wall Opening Sealed

Stone retaining walls are found west of the station on the inbound side, and supporting the entire shelter on the outbound side. Both walls received careful masonry repair and re-pointing. As the platform on the inbound side was raised for ADA compliance, the stone wall there was raised to match, partly with new stones and partly with gray stone slabs. On the north wall, underneath where the western end of the original outbound shelter once stood, a remnant of an old stairway was still visible. These old stairs led from the parking lot directly to the platform, separate from the later stairs alongside the undergrade tunnel. The older staircase pierced through the stone wall, and when removed, this square opening was sealed with wood planks. Halfway through the construction process, the SEPTA construction engineers decided to patch up this opening. The result is controversial: the opening has now been sealed with stone similar to that around it as if it never existed, whereas before the opening was evidence of the original means of accessing the platform. It is curious that the agency would decide to spend time and money on such a “fix.”



Fig. 4.15: This opening in the north retaining wall showed where a staircase originally led passengers to and from the outbound platform. (Photo by the author, July 30, 2009)

Fig. 4.16: The opening was sealed with similar stone, denying its very existence. (Photo by the author, March 24, 2010)



New Roof for Station

The graffiti-ridden roof shingles of Wayne Station were finally removed in the summer of 2009. Whereas the 2000s renovations of Strafford and Radnor Stations were given new slate roofs, Wayne Station's entire roof was given new asphalt singles with a layered appearance, supposedly designed to mimic slate.



Fig. 4.17: The original roof material was revealed, then covered with sheets of plywood. Shown here is the south roof, and the side of the west dormer. (Photo by the author, July 30, 2009)

New Reproduction PRR Signs

While the WSHPA was working with the Pennsylvania Railroad Technical & Historical Society (PRRT&HS) on the early stages of the restoration, the existence of an original ca. 1900 Pennsylvania Railroad cast iron station sign was made known by a family on West Avenue, a short distance from the station. The PRRT&HS paid to have the sign reproduced with the original as a pattern at Cattail Foundry in Lancaster County, Pa. In total, four new signs were made, and painted with the standard red and gold colors typical of these signs throughout the PRR. The new signs were put into storage for about a decade while waiting for station renovations to be complete, and the original sign was kept temporarily at the Radnor Historical Society. One of the reproductions was installed inside the waiting room for patrons to see. As work on the station wound down in June, 2010, the four reproduction signs were installed on the station canopies by SEPTA as a finishing touch to their many months of work. The original sign was then hung inside the station where the one reproduction had been.



Fig. 4.18: Contractors install one of the new signs. (Photo by the author, June 8, 2010)

The Wayne Station project was declared complete in June 2010, and a ceremony was held on June 28. SEPTA's General Manager, politicians and others spoke at the ceremony, which was attended by members of the public eager to patronize the newly reinvigorated station.

PRRT&HS member and Wayne Station historian Phil Ritter read an impromptu history of the station to interested listeners. In acknowledgement of his efforts, Jim Higgins was given a preservation award by the Heritage Commission of Delaware County on May 4, 2010. Shortly after the project was completed, a new vendor began occupying the café space. Besides serving coffee and food to SEPTA riders, the café also hosts musical performances at night.

Although he believes that Wayne Station would still exist today if it had not been for the WSHPA, Higgins does not believe that SEPTA's later upgrades and changes would have been consistent with any historic standards. Inclusion on the National Register, for example, forced SEPTA and their engineers to comply with the recommendations of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Higgins sees two main benefits to SEPTA's upgrades: accommodation of the handicapped, and speeding up train boarding and departures by having platforms at the same level as train doors. "The feature we don't like is the lighting," said Higgins six months after project completion. "The problems we have with the lighting are that there are too many lamps. There are close to 90 lamps illuminating the platforms, inbound and outbound, and illuminating the lower canopy on the north side, and lighting also illuminating the south façade of the building. There are too many lamps, and they're too bright." Higgins has discussed the lighting concerns with SEPTA, which sees the increased illumination as a public safety and security issue

foremost. Higgins sees the lighting issue as the WSHPA's final effort to help the station, that is, until (and if) it falls into disrepair in the future.

Could a group like the WSHPA be successful for the preservation of other stations?

Devon Station, for example, is one of a similar size to Wayne Station, and is in disrepair much the way Wayne was in the 1990s. Says Higgins,

I don't know how you get people to get behind an effort in Devon. In many ways it's a nicer building than the Wayne station, but it needs a patron. It needs an organization to save it, and our organization could work with them. If an organization in that community were formed, we would be happy to give them all the help they wanted, but it has to come from them.

The renovation of Wayne Station over the course of 14 years raises two preservation-related questions: what did the station get out of the project in terms of its historic integrity, and how can other community stations learn from the entire process?

Undoubtedly, the SEPTA renovation brought Wayne Station back to life, in a way that it has not seen for at least fifty years. The Wayne community has a station of which it can be proud. It is attractive, well-maintained (for now), and with every modern convenience. Thanks are owed to the WSHPA, their efforts to put the station on the National Register, and to the PHMC for overseeing the project in terms of historic character. However, there were several instances of what could be called "over-enthusiasm" on SEPTA's part when it came to the retention and understanding of historic fabric, including the replacement of metal columns and overzealous masonry work. Their desire to make the station look "perfect," like a "new old building" led to these decisions, which, in a preservation sense, were not done entirely by the

book. Despite these relatively minor changes, if Wayne Station's current condition is maintained consistently, the renovation will have saved the station from much deterioration.

The WSHPA is a model community effort, and offered a cause that united the town of Wayne to rally around. In terms of publicity and fund-raising, the association was very successful in making the community realize that it could not afford to lose their longtime railroad gateway. The WSHPA's approach was to confront the problem piece by piece, but to do each task right, and as a result their efforts were protracted over a number of years. The wait was worth it, and in the end, SEPTA decided that Wayne would be the perfect station to install their first full-length high-level platforms on the Main Line. Today, there are several historic Main Line stations that are in similar or worse condition to Wayne in the 1990s. If the communities around these stations were to form organizations as effective and sensitive to historic fabric as the WSHPA, and if such groups were to be founded with leadership as dedicated as Jim Higgins has been in Wayne, their stations will have a strong foundation to thrive through the 21st century.



Fig. 4.19: The station's south façade after project completion. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)



Fig. 4.20: Wayne Station, as seen from the new outbound high-level platform. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 4.21: The pristine re-constructed outbound shelter. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)





Fig. 4.22: The underground pedestrian tunnel, once full of graffiti, is now clean. (Photo by the author, August 27, 2010)

Fig. 4.23: James C. Higgins, who founded the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association 14 years before, was given the opportunity to speak at SEPTA's ceremonial ribbon cutting ceremony. (Photo by the author, June 27, 2010)



CHAPTER 5

CASE STUDY: THE POTENTIAL OF DEVON STATION

This chapter focuses on the current conditions and potential of a station that is now in a similar state of preservation to that of Wayne when the community rallied as described in the previous chapter. Devon Station is comparable to Wayne in many ways, from history (it was built concurrently with Wayne, and had the same architect and builder), to architecture (its design and massing are nearly identical to Wayne Station's original construction). The two buildings have their differences, but Devon Station, which has its station agent's residence rooms intact, actually has more potential for adaptive re-use than Wayne.

Unlike Wayne, Devon has a small waiting room that is not conducive to a café/coffee bar use. Other stations, such as Berwyn and Rosemont, have larger spaces (somewhat enlarged in both cases), that allow for offices and retail businesses to rent them, while ticket offices are still kept in service. Has the real estate potential of Devon Station really gone unnoticed all this time by Amtrak? No. In fact, ever since the station passed the century mark in 1983, Amtrak has attempted to lure a developer to the site. A resulting project, as Amtrak has foreseen it, will not only develop the underutilized land on the property, but simultaneously restore the depot. However, after decades of abandoned proposals, Devon Station still sits, deteriorating quickly. Following are synopses of the various development plans over the years, their scopes, and how they failed.

The Bater Plan

In late 1983, Amtrak initiated a station redevelopment program, with the idea of gaining funding through development to maintain small stations such as Devon. Amtrak advertised a “redevelopment opportunity” at Devon Station, and asked local developers to submit proposals for the site.¹

Pursuant with this request, in 1984 William Bater, III, president of Bater Company, Inc., proposed the construction of the “Devon Station Inn” on the property. The existing ticket office would have been converted into a 132-seat restaurant, and the old baggage building/post office (demolished in 2005) would have become the new railroad ticket office. A 32-room motel/inn was to be constructed adjoining the station building, with additional parking facilities. The expanded parking lot would have increased the number of spaces for commuters.

On February 14, 1984, Bater Company, Inc. filed their proposal for Devon Station, in which they stated that “the location, history, design and proposed services are the combined ingredients that will make this project a success.” The original proposal included a 16-room inn (to be doubled after a year of operation) and 80-seat restaurant with 40-seat bar area. The preserved historic character of the station was to be retained, with “wood wainscoting, stucco plaster and stained millwork ... The existing fireplace will be altered and rebuilt for the dining room use.” Bater’s ambitious schedule predicted that Township permits would be obtained by June 1, 1984, major construction would be complete by November 1, and the total operation would be “ready for business” on December 1. Bater cited the increase in area office buildings during that time as a basis for the area’s hotel needs, as well as traffic generated by area colleges

¹ Amtrak Real Estate Department. “A Redevelopment Opportunity: Devon Railroad Station, Devon, Pennsylvania.”

and annual events such as the Devon Horse Show. Bater's estimated cost for the project was \$950,000.²

In March, 1984, Amtrak selected Bater, after their proposal for the country inn and restaurant was determined by the agency to be the best use for the site. On April 13, 1984, Amtrak applied for a variance to permit the construction of the inn.³ Members of the public were not very receptive of the plan; in 1985, Easttown Township received a letter from a concerned citizen: "Wait until you see the problems you will create if you add more confusion to post office traffic; a hotel, bar and the train - it sounds so bad I can't believe it's being considered. Enough said."⁴ A "Save Our Neighborhood" group was formed by the North Devon Citizens' Coalition, and they outlined the reasons for their opposition to the Bater plan: 1) increased traffic in the neighborhood, 2) a permanent transient population would be present in Devon, 3) the proposed bar could cause alcohol-related nuisances, and 4) the development would open the doors for similar changes to the neighborhood. In addition, the needs of the commuters were not adequately considered in the eyes of the group, and they perceived Mr. Bater as the only beneficiary of the project.⁵

On September 3, 1986, Amtrak endorsed the Bater development plan in a letter to the Easttown Township Manager. Construction was planned to begin that fall and be completed in 1987.⁶

² Bater Company, Inc. "Proposal: The Devon Station Inn." February 14, 1984.

³ Letter from Tony DeAngelo, Assistant Vice President, Real Estate Department, Amtrak, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, April 13, 1984.

⁴ Letter from Robert D. Narrigan to Easttown Township Board of Supervisors, June 4, 1985.

⁵ Letter from North Devon Citizens' Coalition to neighbors, no date.

⁶ Letter from Donald J. Pross, Director, Real Estate Development, Amtrak, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, September 3, 1986.

During that year, Bater received approval for the development plan, but by this time funding was unavailable. Eventually a new developer was brought in: Paul Restall Associates.

The Restall Plan

Paul Restall was involved in developing most of the Holiday Inns in Southeastern Pennsylvania. The new inn concept for Devon Station was to cost the developer about \$6 million, and take up a maximum of 64 parking spaces on the site. A new station would have been constructed to serve commuter needs, and the parking surrounding the new structure would have been for commuter use only. The architects attempted to copy the features of the station in the hotel with steeply pitched roofs, and materials such as stone and stucco (see figs. 5.1 and 5.2).

The idea of the Restall plan was introduced to the Easttown Township Board of Supervisors in September, 1988, but it too was not well-received. “I didn’t like it the last time, and I don’t like it this time,” said one Devon resident in attendance. The Board chairman stated that, in his opinion, something had to be done to the site, one of the last undeveloped parcels along Lancaster Avenue. Unlike the Bater plan’s hotel, the Restall establishment would not have included a bar or restaurant.⁷

In April, 1989, Restall submitted their plan with drawings to the township. On August 1, 1989, a hearing of the Easttown Township Planning Commission was held to consider the application of Restall to build the Devon Station Inn. This new inn was to have 60 rooms, with the station’s old waiting room acting as both hotel lobby and SEPTA waiting room. Up to this

⁷ Tuthill, William. “Hotel Project Proposed for Devon Train Station.” *Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 15, 1988.

time, Restall had spent over \$150,000 on developing this plan. The major discussion at this meeting involved concerns over parking and trees on the site.⁸

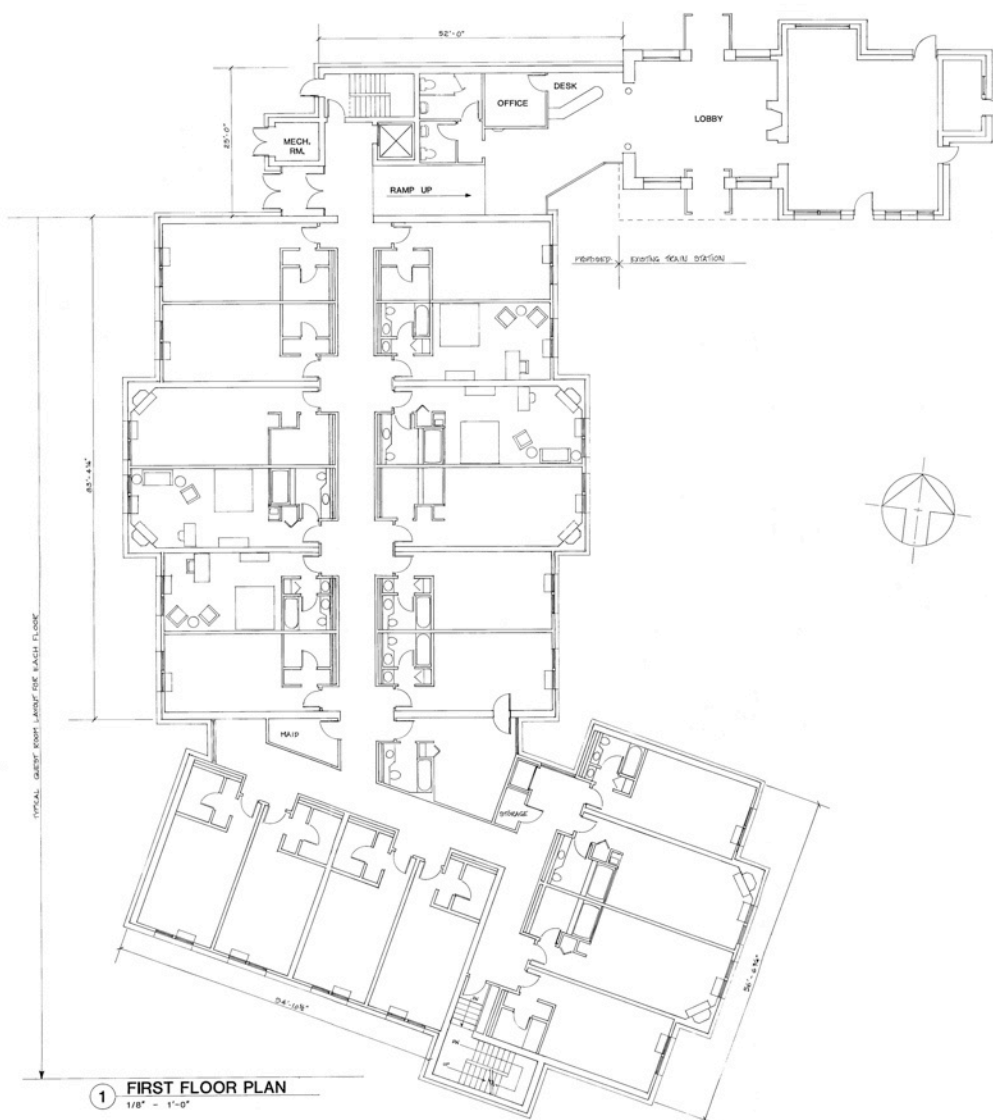
On November 8, 1989, the issue was again brought before the Planning Commission. The acting chairman, William Lytton, noted his concerns that the hotel would not be the best use of the site. Other concerns included the use of the building should the business fail, its physical imposition on the train station, and the historical impact of the plan's density on the station.⁹ Restall soon abandoned the proposal.

⁸ Transcript, Easttown Township Planning Commission meeting, August 1, 1989.

⁹ Minutes, Easttown Township Planning Commission, November 8, 1989.



Fig. 5.1, 5.2: East elevation (above) and first floor plan (below) of the Restall plan for the so-called Devon Station Inn. The drawings were part of a package dated March, 1989. In the elevation, the station itself is the portion of the complex at right. The new portion features a stone water table and gable details designed to mimic the station. In the plan, the station is at the upper right of the drawing. (Easttown Township)



Easttown Township Confronts Amtrak and SEPTA

Eight years passed since Amtrak began seeking proposals for the development of Devon Station, and neither Amtrak nor SEPTA had undertaken any new upgrades to the physical condition of the building. In the Spring of 1991, SEPTA officials met with the Easttown Township Manager to discuss improvements for the station. In a follow-up letter, a SEPTA Government Relations representative stated that “SEPTA has developed a Station Improvement Program to upgrade our long neglected railroad stations. However, the success of the program is contingent on SEPTA obtaining additional government funding.”¹⁰

Development proposals for the site continued to be submitted, none of them as large as the hotel concept, and ultimately, none of them consequential. One design, prepared by land planner/landscape architect R. Douglas Stewart & Associates Ltd., called for a new office building to the west of the station, fronting on Waterloo Road (see fig. 5.3).¹¹

Easttown Township Manager Gene R. Williams continued to hound Amtrak about the failing condition of the station into the next decade. In a letter dated October 10, 2000, Amtrak stated that the “maintenance of the station is basically a SEPTA responsibility but understandably SEPTA is very reluctant to put any substantial money into the property in view of Amtrak’s well-known desire to see the property developed commercially, which would include as a precondition a complete rehabilitation of the station building.”¹²

¹⁰ Letter from John J. Rankin, Jr., Government Relations, SEPTA, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, April 2, 1991.

¹¹ Plan by R. Douglas Stewart Associates Ltd., dated April 27, 1999.

¹² Letter from John F. Jaeger, Project Director, Amtrak, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, October 10, 2000.

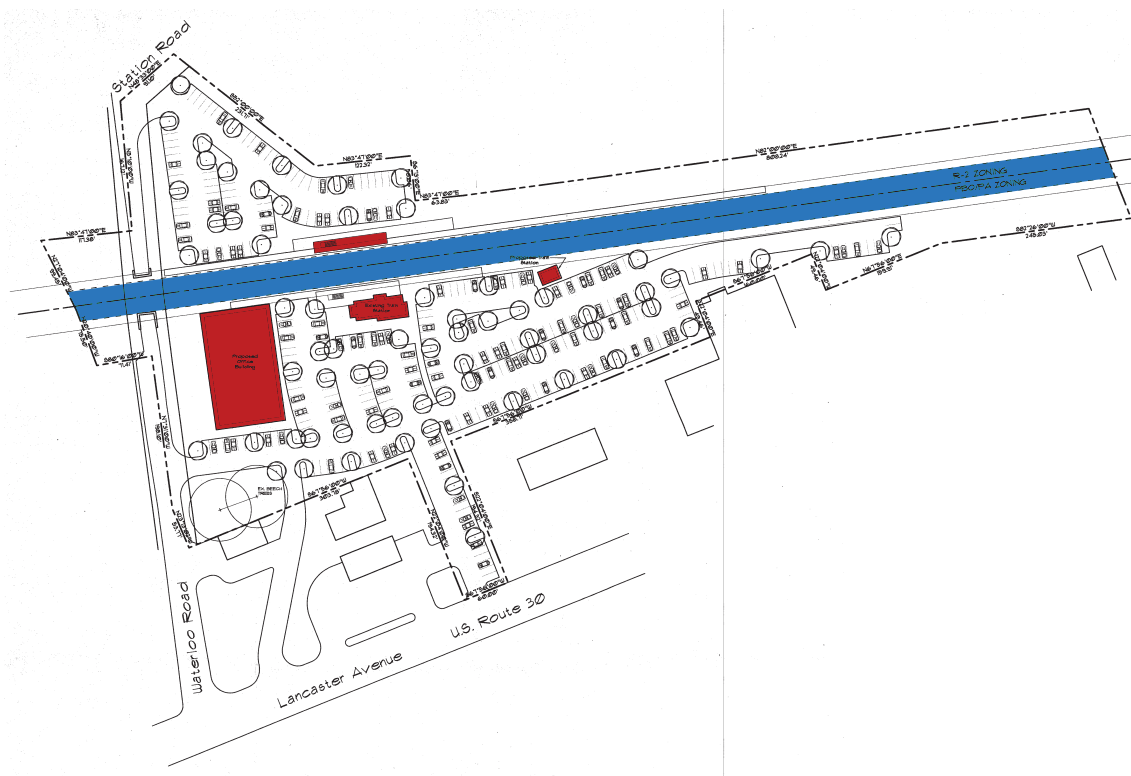


Fig. 5.3: The 1999 proposal for Devon Station (buildings highlighted in red; tracks in blue). This plan would have resulted in a new office building (at left), and new station building (at right), with the restored historic station in between. (Easttown Township, colored by the author)

Tensions between Williams and the agencies continued to become increasingly heated, and on November 5, 2002, Williams formally requested that Amtrak and SEPTA better maintain Devon Station, as the township saw it as a liability.¹³ In a response dated February of the following year, SEPTA General Manager Faye L. M. Moore stated that SEPTA had not performed renovations on Devon Station in deference to Amtrak's desire to redevelop the property, though SEPTA had and would insure public safety and comfort. SEPTA would not commit resources to improving the building "so long as the location of our ticket office and the adjacent waiting room is an unresolved issue in Amtrak's redevelopment proposals."¹⁴

¹³ Letter from Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, to Terrence Foley, Senior Director of Real Estate Development, Amtrak, November 5, 2002.

¹⁴ Letter from Faye L. M. Moore, General Manager, SEPTA, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, February 4, 2003.

With the township's patience running thin, Williams informed Amtrak in a letter dated June 4, 2004 that the township Board of Supervisors would consider the old baggage building a nuisance unless measures were taken prior to their next meeting (June 21). In response, an Amtrak official stated that he didn't appreciate the Manager's "threats," and that the township lacked any authority, as the property was owned by the Federal Government.¹⁵ As scheduled, the township Board of Supervisors passed Resolution 06.21.04, formally requesting that Amtrak and SEPTA remove the baggage building, or the Township would have it removed and collect the cost from the owner.¹⁶ The next day, in a frustrated letter to SEPTA and Amtrak officials that was copied to officials including U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, Williams voiced the Township's frustrations at the lack of development and continuing decline of Devon Station. Mr. Williams referenced plans going back to the 1980s that were never completed, and noted the "unsafe structure" (old baggage building) on the site that should be subject to "abatement ... in accordance with the Easttown Township Building Code."¹⁷ A month later, an Amtrak legal notice stated that the township's resolution was "in direct conflict with Amtrak's federal authorizing statute, which explicitly provides that Amtrak is to be free from state and local regulation of its rights-of-way and its buildings." Further, the letter stated that SEPTA would remove the building, but not within the time prescribed by the resolution.¹⁸ The building was finally demolished, and tensions between the agencies and the township simmered down.

¹⁵ Emails between Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, and Terrence Foley, Project Director, Amtrak, June 4, 2004.

¹⁶ Easttown Township Resolution 06.21.04.

¹⁷ Letter from Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, to Elizabeth Nuding, Board Secretary, SEPTA, and Terrence J. Foley, Project Director, Amtrak, June 22, 2004.

¹⁸ Letter from Dennis M. Moore, Senior Associate General Counsel, Litigation, Amtrak, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, July 21, 2004.

The TranSystems Proposals

Intent on encouraging SEPTA to adopt a restoration plan for the station, Easttown Township hired TranSystems | DPK&A Architects (previously the architects for the Strafford, Radnor and Overbrook Station restorations) to submit plans and cost estimates for a potential renovation of Devon Station. Following a Conditions Assessment Report written in 2008, a Conceptual Design Report was submitted on July 1, 2009. A stakeholder committee was consulted during the process, consisting of station neighbors, Devon business owners, planners, politicians, township officials, SEPTA and the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission. The committee decided that rather than a large-scale development like that sought by Amtrak for 25 years, a simple restoration of the station was the top priority.

Restoration of the station's historic fabric is of paramount importance in the two TranSystems plans. "As much existing building fabric will be retained and repaired as possible. The report stated that where the physical materials had deteriorated beyond repair, they would be replaced 'in kind' to the greatest extent possible."¹⁹ The report also listed 30 SEPTA-operated stations (one on the Main Line) that had been adapted to suit other uses, including restaurants, post offices, offices, shops, etc.

TranSystems' "Option 1" plan for Devon Station (see figs. 5.4, 5.5) involved building new 500 foot-long pre-cast concrete high-level platforms to the east of the station, similar to what SEPTA built at Wayne from 2008-2010. This proposal has one major difference from Wayne: a new SEPTA station including ticket office, waiting room and toilets would have been built at the new platform level east of the historic station, at an estimated expense of \$800,400.

¹⁹ TranSystems|DPK&A. "Conceptual Design Report, Devon Train Station," 9.

While a new station building would have serviced the needs of commuters, the old station would have remained and been restored for new uses. In a section on funding in their report, TranSystems expressed concern that if this option were adopted, SEPTA might save money by doing all of the steps involving new facilities while leaving the historic station alone to deteriorate further. Rents from the historic station space alone would not have paid for that building's renovations. This option was estimated to cost a total of \$9,068,822.

“Option 2” (see figs. 5.6, 5.7) involved raising the entire station and platforms 48 inches to the new platform height. By raising the station, its use and central orientation to the train stop would have been retained, unlike at Wayne, where the new high-level platforms were built away from the station. In this scheme, Devon Station would have remained centered within the new 500 foot-long platforms. New grading to the south of the station would have preserved the approach to the building, downplaying the appearance of the station being higher than it had been previously. An adjacent newsstand/retail structure would have been constructed, and the former residence portion of the station would have been transformed into a suite of offices, with a reception area on the first floor. The estimate for raising the station and canopies was estimated at \$1,143,675. This option in total was estimated to cost \$8,362,469.

The cost estimates are broken down in terms of specific historic restoration costs. For exterior wall work, including masonry, stucco and wood on the station as well as work on the undergrade tunnel and outbound shelter, was estimated at \$272,616. Repairing windows was estimated at \$47,979, and restoration of doors was estimated at \$19,292. Repair of the slate roof, including replacing missing terra cotta ridge tiles, was to be a major expense at \$503,645. Interior work was another major expense, at \$356,052.

TranSystems did not include an option combining some of the less expensive aspects of each option that would have undoubtedly resulted in a drastically more affordable alternative. In such a scheme, Devon Station could have been restored and left at its current level, and new high-level platforms to the station's east would serve passengers (much like option 1). Instead of building a new structure for ticket vending and waiting functions, the historic station could be retained for both uses (as specified in option 2). This scheme would closely resemble what SEPTA achieved at Wayne Station, by restoring the station and keeping it as *the* station while erecting high-level platforms to the east. Such a scheme would avoid physically raising the building (a more than \$1 million expense), and also avoid constructing an entirely new station structure at the high-level platforms (an estimated \$800,000 expense).

On April 16, 2010, SEPTA finally acknowledged receipt of the TranSystems proposals. However, General Manager Joseph M. Casey wrote in a letter to Township Manager Williams: "SEPTA is unable to commit to begin implementing the study recommendations at this time," citing a \$110 million reduction in their capital budget proposal.²⁰

²⁰ Letter from Joseph M. Casey, General Manager, SEPTA, to Gene R. Williams, Easttown Township Manager, April 16, 2010.

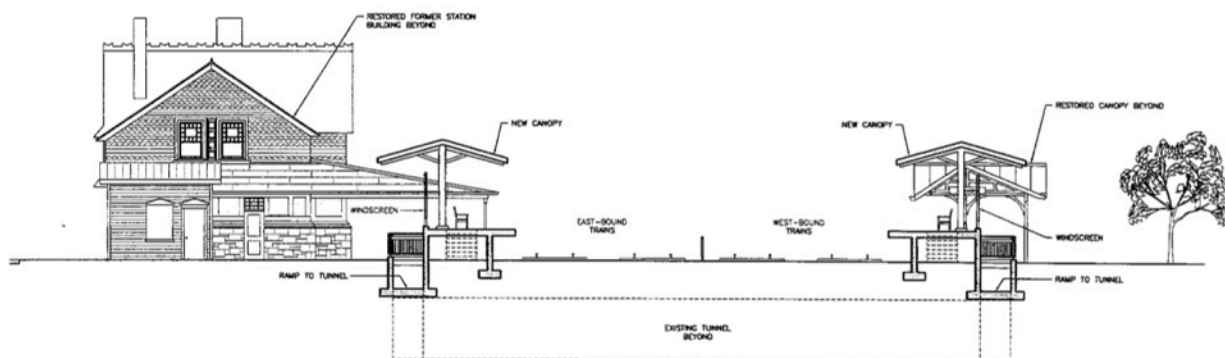
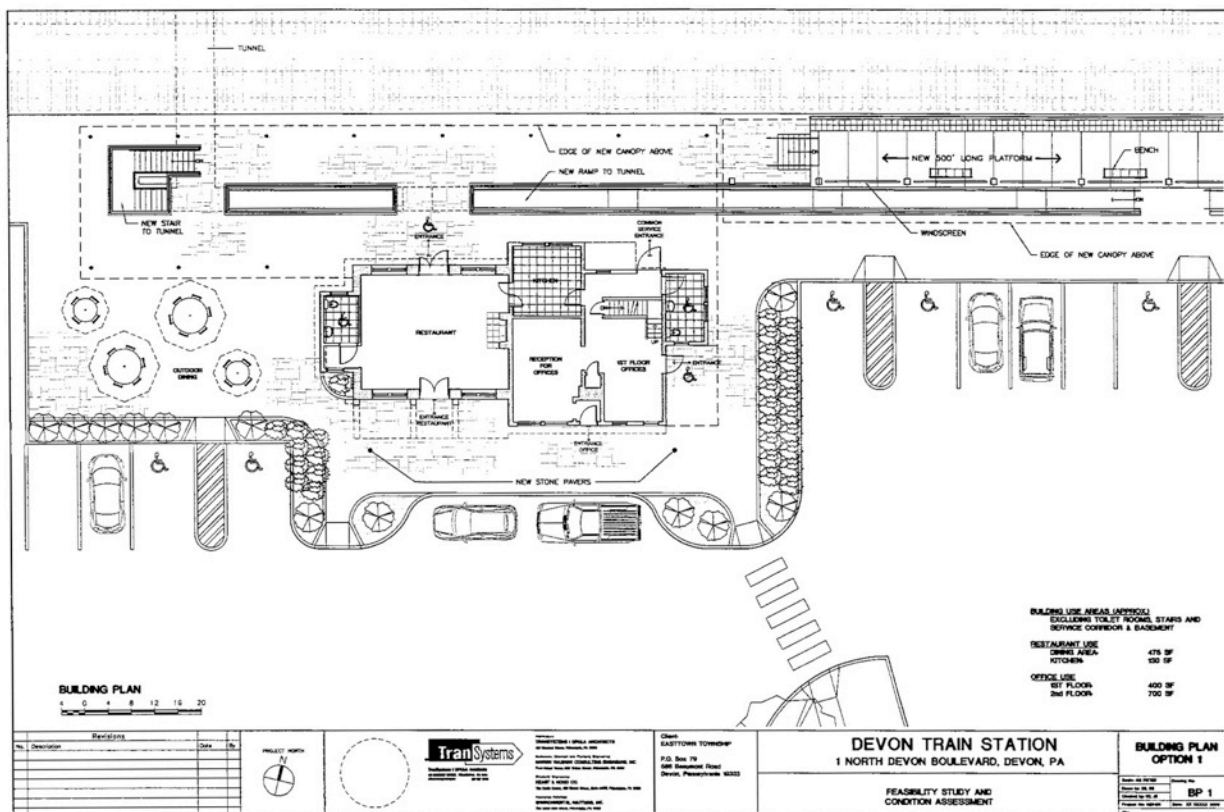


Fig. 5.4, 5.5: A section elevation looking west (above) and plan (below) of TranSystems' July, 2009 "Option 1" for Devon Station. This proposal includes the creation of high-level platforms east of the station, similar to those built at Wayne, and a new ticket office/waiting room building adjoining the new inbound platform (not shown in either drawing copied here). (Easttown Township)



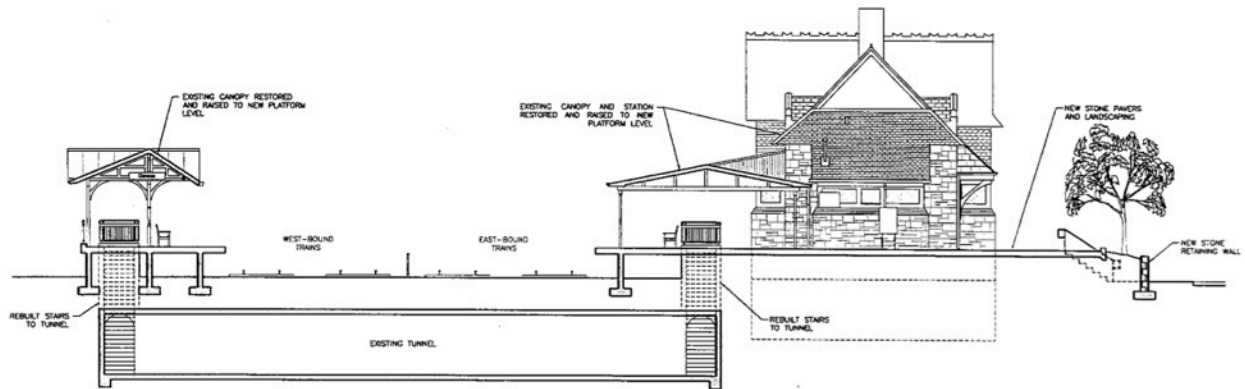
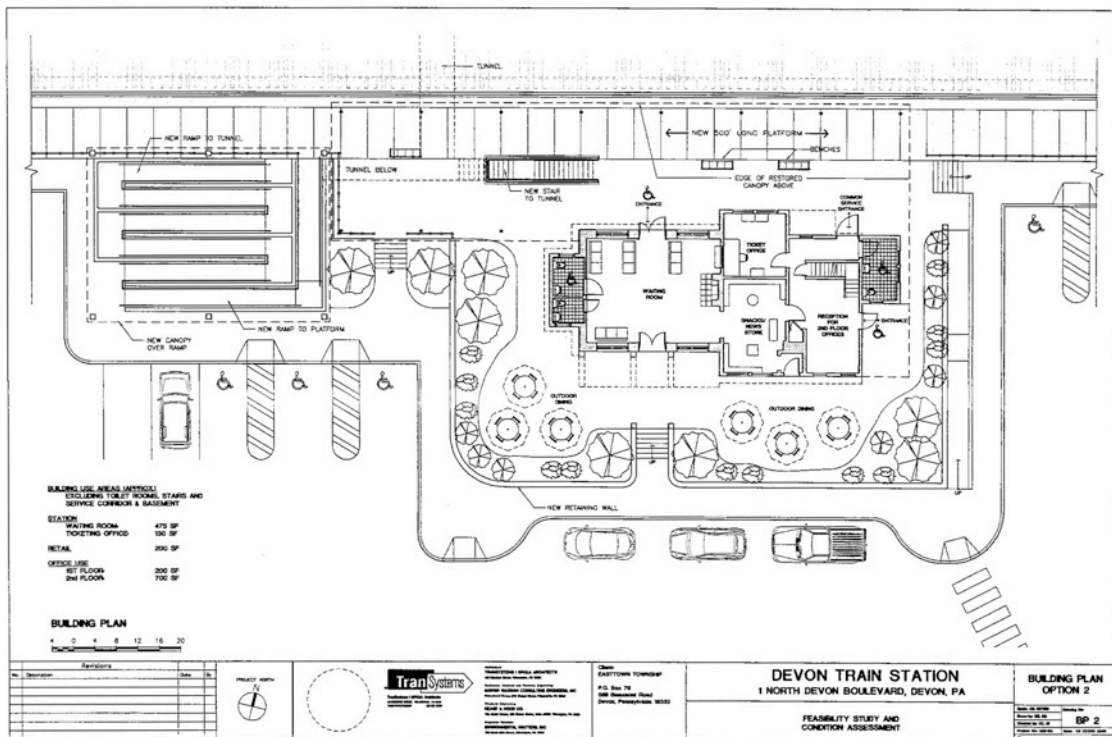


Fig. 5.6, 5.7: A section elevation looking east (above) and plan (below) of TranSystems' July, 2009 "Option 2" for Devon Station. This proposal includes the creation of high-level platforms east of and in front of the station on the inbound side, and below the outbound shelter. The station and outbound shelter would be raised to conform with the height of the new platforms, allowing the station to retain its use as a ticket office and waiting room at the same level as the platforms. (Easttown Township)



Easttown Township is a small municipality, and the local government obviously sees the potential in Devon Station and recognizes its importance as a gateway to their community. They have attempted to work with the railroad agencies to come up with a solution to save the station, even going as far as to get drawings from the region's most respected railway station restoration architects. Their pleas have fallen on deaf ears, at the expense of the station's floundering condition. While stations such as Wayne that have barely more daily riders than Devon have received over \$22 million dollar renovations, Devon Station has received little more than a fresh coat of paint in the last twenty-five years.

Devon Station is an incredibly attractive, historically intact work of classic railroad architecture. It was built at a major development turning point for the Devon community, which has grown around and has been inspired by its unique architecture. It would seem that many would relish the opportunity to occupy the space (and many have). So what has gone wrong, and why can't any development proposal come to fruition?

Devon is not a town with a very walkable downtown center. Lancaster Avenue runs through Devon just like it does through Wayne and Berwyn, yet the majority of businesses that operate there are only accessible by automobile, including banks, gas stations and a Mercedes-Benz dealership. The Devon Horse Show takes up a major piece of real estate on the Avenue, as does a large garden store, Waterloo Gardens. Neighborhoods are found to the south and north, similar in placement to North and South Wayne in relation to Wayne Station, but they were not as carefully planned. Why a walkable downtown, with a row of stores and simple conveniences, never materialized in Devon is a strange question. Perhaps the reason is because, while Wayne and Berwyn were sprouting up with homes and storefronts in the late 19th century, Devon was a

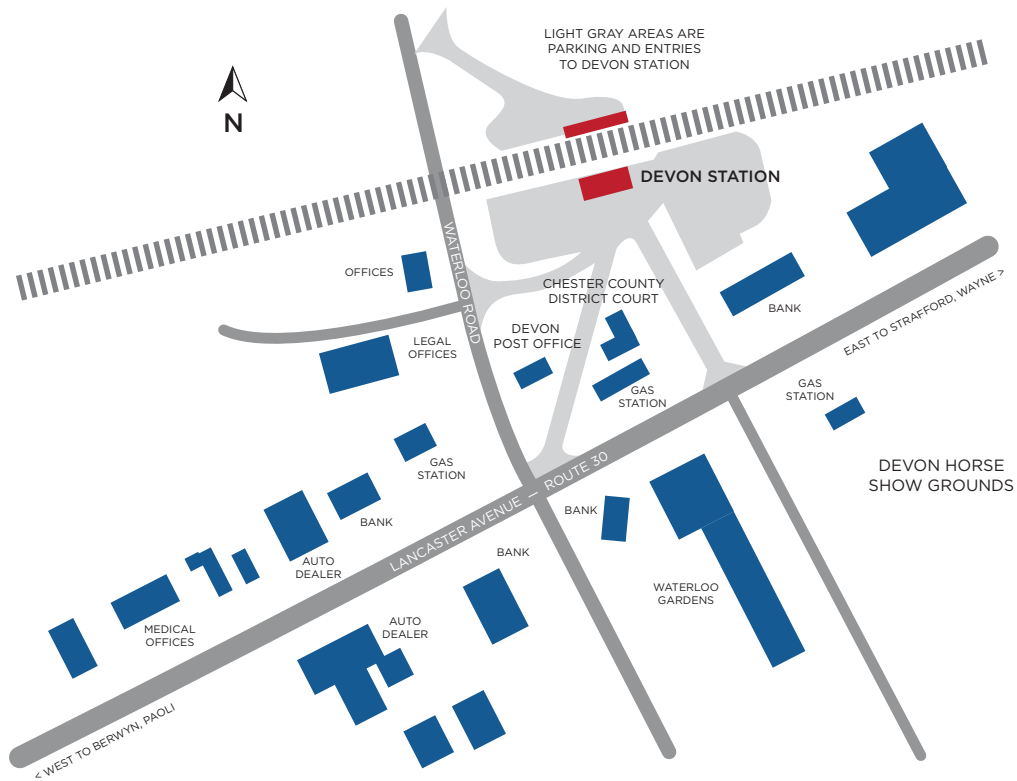
resort community, consisting of the station, a large hotel, and later, the Horse Show. In its early history it was a rural vacation spot, and the growth of a commercial strip along Lancaster Pike would have been a distraction from the real draw of the town.

Devon Station's current state could be traced back to this lack of a cohesive downtown unit. Part of Wayne Station's appeal, and the resulting effort to restore it, came from the fact that it was within walking distance of a news agency, many coffee houses, an ice cream parlor, a fantastic Art Deco movie house, and other simple conveniences. Besides the Horse Show, a former Studebaker dealership is the most interesting building within walking distance of Devon Station.

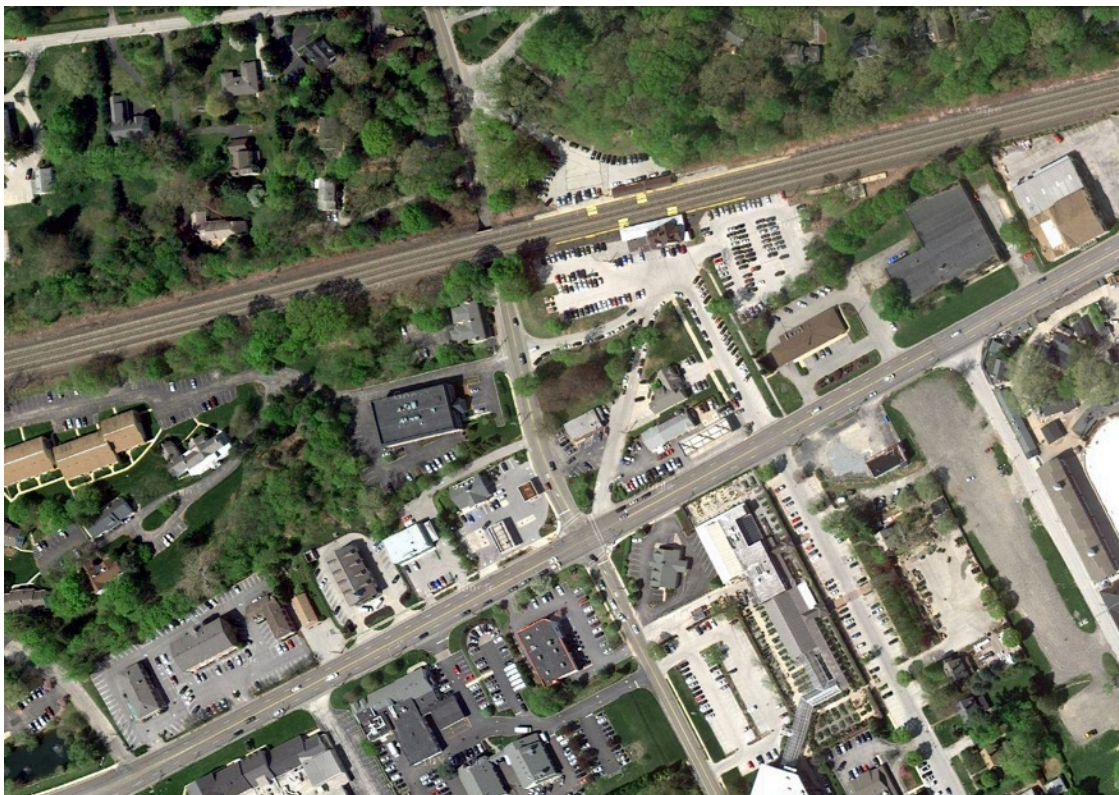
Potential for Space Rental

According to the Claritas database, there is a huge retail opportunity surplus in the Devon-Berwyn area (the towns are grouped together in the United States Census). The estimated 2009 demand for retail goods was just over \$101 million, with the supply at over \$355 million. That leaves more than a quarter of a billion dollars in retail surplus. Granted, this figure is largely due to the fact that many non-residents from neighboring communities come to these towns for shopping, but it is clear that Devon and Berwyn are overrun with retail stores. Restaurants are included in this figure. The 2009 demand for "meals and snacks" was just over \$10 million, while the supply was nearly \$13 million. It therefore seems logical that an office would work best in Devon Station, rather than a restaurant or small boutique shop.

Map 5.1 and the corresponding satellite photograph show Devon Station and its surroundings. Unlike most other Main Line towns, the commercial area in the center of town is



Map 5.1, Fig. 5.8: Map and satellite view of the area surrounding Devon Station, and the types of businesses found there. (Map by the author; satellite view from Google Earth, retrieved April, 2011)



not pedestrian-friendly. Lancaster Avenue (aka Route 30 and the Lancaster Turnpike) runs parallel to the railroad, and acts as the commercial backbone for the entire Main Line. This is no different in Devon, although the kind of stores and businesses that operate in the middle of town are best accessible by automobile. Most other Main Line communities have many restaurants, coffee bars, apartments and boutique retail shops along their sections of Lancaster Avenue; besides convenience stores attached to gas stations and the post office, Devon is relatively barren in commercial respects. Because of this lack of retail accessibility, and the retail demand surplus for the area, it seems best that a retail operation not occupy the station.

One interesting neighbor to Devon Station is the Chester County District Court branch. Located just south of the station on the same block (even with the same driveway), the court is in a building that it shares with offices. On the west side of Waterloo Road, just across from the station property, is a small law office. Given the location of the court, it seems possible that another small law practice could utilize the potential office space within Devon Station.

A well-known commercial real estate company located in Berwyn is Eadeh Enterprises. Eadeh properties dot the Main Line, with many in the area near Devon Station. Figs. 5.9 through 5.12 show a sampling of their properties that are roughly comparable to Devon Station. The 750 square feet for rent in Devon (fig. 5.12) is actually part of the Chester County District Court building on the same block as the station. The average price per month for these spaces is about \$1.50 per square foot; a restored Devon Station could presumably fall in line with that price range. As noted by the TranSystems report, such a rental could not cover the costs of the building's restoration, but they would give the building security, and bring in infinitely more money than is currently being generated.



Berwyn: 3750 sq. ft. : \$4000/mo.



Wayne: 3000 sq. ft. : \$5500/mo.



Berwyn: 630 sq. ft. : \$1000/mo.



Devon: 750 sq. ft. : \$1200/mo.

Fig. 5.9, 5.10, 5.11, 5.12: Four Main Line properties offered by Eadeh Enterprises for rent as office spaces in Spring, 2011. The Devon listing at lower right is vacant space within the District Court building just south of the station. (All images from eadeh.com; retrieved April, 2011)

Devon Station is a substantial building, with a substantially important history and substantial problems. To a passing commuter, the condition of the station is saddening, yet once one reads the long history of inaction on the parts of its caretakers, the story becomes heartbreaking. The town of Devon is an unusual one on the Main Line: not easily walkable, and lacking some amenities found in neighboring communities. Yet it remains a desirable zip code to call home, as evidenced by the demographics of its property owners. Along with the Devon Horse Show, the station is the historical and psychological heart of Devon.

An effort to restore Devon Station could make use of several factors: the high commuter traffic at the SEPTA stop; the affluence of neighbors; and the unique qualities, integrity and history of the building. For an enthusiast of railroad architecture, visiting the station for the first time is like a dream. The original slate still covers the roof! All of the original doors and windows are still in place! The waiting room fireplace mantel remains! The station agent's residence is still in its original configuration! What other station that has seen 128 years of daily use can appear so virtually untouched?

An attempt to save Devon Station would take community involvement more massive in scale than the Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association, followed by consistent care and attention. Easttown Township has an ever-more active historical society (which it shares with Tredyffrin Township), an Historical Commission, and a band of local historians who are interested in topics as diverse as the Horse Show and old estates. Each has a vested interest in the preservation of Devon Station, and ultimately it is they who will determine the building's future, if it is to have one.

CONCLUSION

In railroad terms, Lower Merion Township is best known for being home to seven of the Main Line's 17 train stations, more than any other single township. The former PRR Schuylkill Valley Branch, a lesser known, now SEPTA-maintained route passes through the Bala Cynwyd section of the township, terminating at Cynwyd Station. The line originally led past the storied West Laurel Hill Cemetery into the corner of Philadelphia known as Manayunk, until concerns over the condition of a bridge over the Schuylkill River led to the line being shortened. The abandoned portion of the right-of-way is being converted into the Cynwyd Heritage Trail by Lower Merion Township. As of this writing, the project is just coming into fruition. In conjunction with the trail, the Lower Merion Historical Society is working to turn the Cynwyd Station, an 1890s-era PRR standard-design station now owned by SEPTA, into a trailhead with amenities for trail visitors, and an apartment above.

This rehabilitation and re-purposing of Cynwyd Station was made possible because the Cynwyd line is much simpler than the Paoli/Thorndale line: SEPTA owns the station (Amtrak has no involvement), the line is the least travelled of all of SEPTA's commuter rail lines, and the depot stands at the beginning of a soon-to-be thriving public outdoor space. The conditions are right at Cynwyd for a group like the Historical Society to make that station useful again, but such conditions are anything but simple elsewhere on the Main Line. As a 30 year-long string of would-be developers found out at Devon, fixing up and re-using an old station on the Main Line can be a costly, burdensome and ultimately fruitless venture.

And yet, where the rich and powerful developers have failed, neighbors and patrons have succeeded, albeit in small ways. In Wayne, a community group got the ball rolling, and when SEPTA decided to spend millions to bring the station up-to-date, they conformed to the station's historical needs. Thanks to the diligence of civic groups, both Merion and Wynnewood stations are well-kept and attractive. SEPTA may not take much interest in the idea that stations are gateways to communities, but those communities know it, and take pride in that fact.

In other cases, private development has made Main Line stations viable. In the 1980s, developer John J. Shields successfully converted Berwyn and Rosemont stations into offices and retail operations that remain occupied to this day (albeit with mixed results in terms of retaining historic fabric). Businesses such as the ones at these stations, and even small operations like coffee bars that occupy nothing more than a counter inside a waiting room, give life and usefulness to stations for SEPTA patrons and non-commuting locals alike.

The Wayne Station Historic Preservation Association, described in chapter four, was a successful effort by dedicated members of Wayne Station's surrounding community to advocate for and perform historically accurate restorations. That project would never have been possible without the work of a few individuals, who spurred the community to support the cause financially and symbolically. Over the 15 years of the WSHPA's existence, members of that organization learned the ins and outs of dealing with the SEPTA and Amtrak bureaucracies, fund raising, and much more. If the community of Devon, for example, were to pursue a similar grassroots effort to restore their station, they could learn a great deal from the successes and missteps of the WSHPA.

In fact, the WSHPA could be part of a coalition, along with Merion and Wynnewood civic associations, to share their insights and experiences with neighboring communities that wish to take advantage of their historic train stations and take it upon themselves to help restore these important community gateways.

Grassroots efforts rely completely upon the dedication of the unpaid volunteers who run them. A group of volunteers who are experienced, knowledgeable, and most importantly, free of other time-consuming obligations, will be most likely to achieve success when attempting to wade through the arduous processes necessary to turn their goals into reality. The Cynwyd Station project is one local success story, but there are others. The historical society in Sharon Hill, Delaware County, Pa., is currently working to save their ca. 1872 Pennsylvania Railroad station, which, like those of the Main Line, has both SEPTA and Amtrak uses. In Newtown Square, Pa., also in Delaware County, the Newtown Square Historical Preservation Society took it upon themselves to save a ca. 1895 PRR freight station from the railroad's abandoned line there, and used that opportunity to create the outdoor Newtown Square Railroad Museum. The building was moved to parkland, and now occupies that space with railroad equipment from various sources.¹

Pride of railroad heritage is alive with these groups, which demonstrate that railroad history in the Philadelphia area stretches far beyond the Main Line. Each effort has involved fund raising, support from local and state politicians, obtaining grants, and much more organizational and planning work. A local railroad heritage coalition could utilize the experiences of each effort to help other local train stations and rail heritage projects in need.

¹ <http://www.newtownsquare-railroadmuseum.org>



Fig. C.1: Cynwyd Station, as seen towards the end of its conversion into a trailhead and apartment for the Cynwyd Heritage Trail. (Photo by the author, January 22, 2011)

Fig. C.2: Sharon Hill Station is awaiting funds to be restored by the Sharon Hill Historical Society. (Photo by the author, October 15, 2010)



Despite its vivid historical imagery and strong public curiosity, not much is being done on the Main Line in terms of interpreting the railroad's history. There are three examples of railroad-centric interpretive displays in Lower Merion Township, all of which focus on the early history of the Main Line. On Montgomery Avenue between the historic General Wayne Inn and Merion Friends Meeting (just north of where the old P&C route originally ran), the Lower Merion Historical Society has erected a sort of monument to the original Main Line railroad (see fig. C.3). Original stone sleeper blocks support two sections of parallel rail, creating a powerful and effective display. An interpretive panel tells a brief history of the P&C, and describes the rail and sleeper re-creation in front of it.

In Bala Cynwyd, Pa., close to Merion Station, a mural is painted on the side of the Babis Pharmacy, depicting the history of transportation on the Main Line (see fig. C.4). Furthest to the left is a Conestoga wagon; next is a horse-drawn rail car from the early days of the P&C; finally, the early steam locomotive "Tioga" is shown beside a railroad tower.

In Ardmore, on the wall of a Wawa convenience store just south of the railroad, a pair of murals depict the historic Ardmore train station (see figs. C.5, C.6). These murals, installed in September, 2001, were made possible by the North Ardmore Civic Association and Wawa. They appear to the passing viewer almost as windows to the past: brightly colored, full of activity and depicting people in period clothing. These murals are a good example of how historical images can be re-interpreted viscerally and placed prominently. Unfortunately, they contain various historical inaccuracies that distort the story. The artist, Alice Dustin, is a wonderful painter of still-life compositions that evidently took some artistic liberties in her depiction of the scenes. The accompanying plaque set between the two compositions reads "ARDMORE TRAIN

STATION / CIRCA 1860.” The large stone structure depicted was built in 1872 by the railroad; in 1860 nothing more than a small shack stood by the side of the tracks at Ardmore. There is photographic evidence that patterned shingles were found on the roof of Ardmore Station, though it is unlikely that red slate was used as the primary material. A less noticeable detail is the station sign in the left mural; it reads “Athensville,” a name that was probably never assigned to the station shown.

Unfortunately, the murals at Ardmore only misinterpret the history of the community’s railroad heritage. The panels provided a rare opportunity to tell the story of the town’s incredible station, and yet they revise that story. Likewise, the interpretive display with actual rails and sleepers uses modern rails not yet invented during the time of the P&C. This is a rather minor detail, yet the use of re-created rails of the original shape would have further displayed how differently this ancient railroad operated.

The opportunities for interpretation are vast for Main Line train stations. Although the three examples described were found within the towns surrounding train stations, signage, objects, and artwork could be employed on station platforms to educate those who wait sometimes inordinate amounts of time for their trains. It is rare to have this kind of captive audience, and the engaging stories that can be told here could lead patrons and visitors to take more active roles in station preservation.



Fig. C.3: Interpretive sign and tracks on authentic sleeper stones in Merion, Pa. The display was erected by the Lower Merion Historical Society. (Photo by the author, March 22, 2011)

Fig. C.4: Mural in Bala Cynwyd, Pa., near Merion Station, commemorating the P&C Railroad and the locomotive "Tioga." (Photo by the author, March 27, 2011)





Fig. C.5, C.6: A mural on the side of a Wawa convenience store in Ardmore, Pa., depicts the 1872 Ardmore Station in ca. 1860, according to its plaque. The colors are speculative, and the sign on the station in the panel below reads “Athensville.” (Photos by the author, January 19, 2011)



As outlined in the introduction, there were many potential sources of historical information that could not be visited for this thesis. The scale and nature of these holdings is unknown, yet they may reveal as yet undiscovered data and imagery in relation to the Main Line train stations. Besides compiling additional historical items and making chapter two even longer, it would be interesting to speak with members and directors past and present of the Merion Civic Association and Wynnewood Civic Association to understand their relationship with the transit agencies and methods for successfully mobilizing communities to work on beautifying their stations. Understanding the process by which the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission evaluates SEPTA proposals for renovations, such as those of Wayne and the future renovation of Villanova Station, would be an interesting study.²

Some of the information in this thesis will become obsolete almost as quickly as it is printed. Such is inevitable when there are 18 buildings involved, most in constant use by hundreds of passengers every day. In particular, Villanova Station is currently (as of this writing) in the process of having its future determined, and within a year will be in a state of flux much like Wayne Station was in 2008. Whatever happens there will change the station's historic fabric forever, and the scale of these changes is yet to be finalized.

It is easy to get caught up in the historical minutia of design drawings, but proposed changes such as Villanova's are actually a good sign for the Main Line. SEPTA's plans to make extensive upgrades to the stations they lease from Amtrak are signs that they are committed to the future of rail travel in suburban Philadelphia. For a long period in the mid-20th century – between about 1960 and 1980 – almost nothing was done to improve or restore the stations. This

² Members of the Merion Civic Association, Wynnewood Civic Association, and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission were sought to be interviewed for this thesis, but could not be reached.

era was one of uncertainty for the line and the railroad as a whole with the downfall and bankruptcy of Penn Central, but trains continued to run each day and station buildings continued to be used. Those who care about their local stations can take comfort in the fact that SEPTA does spend significant resources to restore them, even if that doesn't mean immediate help for these resources that need it the most.

SEPTA means well, but the agency sometimes needs prodding from its constituents. It is a bureaucracy with a strict budget, about 150 rail stations to manage, and a plethora of equipment, buses, trackage, etc. It cannot adequately prioritize the needs of its many assets, a great deal of which are historically significant. Inheriting a massive infrastructure from many sources, including what had been the world's largest corporation, is a daunting proposition, and SEPTA is doing what it can. What it cannot do is properly evaluate the meaning and symbolism that its many assets hold within the communities where they are located. For that, it needs our help.

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